'EVERYBODY WANTS TO STAND OUT IN LIFE':

NEW FORMS OF SELF-EXPRESSION AMONG URBAN LOWER-CLASS YOUTH
IN NEOLIBERALIZING TURKEY

by

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ABSTRACT

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Popular Culture, Turkey

This thesis draws on an ethnographic study in which I followed the peculiar ways lower
class male youth carve out spaces for themselves in the Turkish society and negotiate
their subjectivities by differentiating themselves from others mainly through style. I
analyze the contemporary forms of self-expression that they adopt in relation primarily
to the history of discursive exclusion of urban lower classes in Turkey and to the
Turkish variant of neoliberalism experienced in the recent decades. I argue that through
their creative and insistent interventions young people unsettle the symbolic order of the
society and transcend the cultural and spatial boundaries imposed upon them. Contrary
to the representation of lower class youth in dominant discourses as wannabes, I see
these new practices and forms of self-expression as their attempts to become themselves
and to stand out from the crowds.

ÖZET

'HERKES HAYATTA FARKLI OLMAK İSTER':

NEOLİBERALLEŞEN TÜRKİYE'DE KENTLİ ALT SINIF GENÇLERİ ARASINDAKİ YENİ KENDİNİ İFADE ETME BİÇİMLERİ

Aydın Özipek

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Anahtar Sözcükler: Alt Sınıf Gençliği, Neoliberalizm, Görünürlük ve Performans, Popüler Kültür, Türkiye

Bu tez, alt sınıf gençlerinin özellikle stil aracılığıyla Türk toplumunda kendilerine yeni alanlar açma ve öznelliklerini kurma arayışlarına odaklandığım etnografik bir çalışmanın ürünüdür. Özellikle genç erkekler arasında son dönemde yaygınlaşan bu yeni kendini ifade etme biçimlerini; temel olarak Türkiye neoliberalleşmesi ve Türkiye'de geçmişten bugüne var olan alt sınıfların söylemde ötekileştirilmesi bağlamlarında ele alıyorum. Bu tezde, gençlerin yaratıcı ve de ısrarcı müdahaleler yoluyla toplumun sembolik düzenini sarstıklarını ve kendilerine atfedilen kültürel ve mekansal sınırları aştıklarını iddia ediyorum. Hakim söylemlerde alt sınıf gençlerinin "özenti" ve/ya "taklitçi" olarak temsil edilmelerinin aksine, ben bu tezde gençlerin tez boyunca anlattığım yeni pratiklerini ve kendilerini ifade etme biçimlerini onların kendileri olma ve farklı olma arayışlarının bir tezahürü olarak görüyorum.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In a chilly Saturday evening, I walked the streets of Bakırkoy, a commercial district located on the European part of Istanbul with a great number of shops, cafes and bars that are filled by young people coming from neighboring lower class districts, with the hope of coming across *apaçis* to interview for my research. As streets were mostly empty due to the cold weather, I decided to try cafes. On a street with cafes adjacent to one another, I picked one and timidly told an employee that I am interested in interviewing *apaçis* for my ethnographic research. He smiled and wagged his finger at the next café, where he said I could find "people like that". Two young men greeted me there, yet they got a little offended after I told them what the man next door had said. "He called us *apaçis*!", one of them complained to the other. Then, upon their advice, I headed to Café Criss, a daytime basement dance club which was closed at that moment, yet I got the chance of having a brief conversation with its owner. I briefed him about my research, and then he said: "You can't find *apaçis* here, we got rid of them, we don't let them in anymore". "Why?", I asked with a surprised and disappointed look on my face. "Because they are *apaçis*", he responded, "It is as simple as that, we want to have more decent people here, and this is why we check people's appearance before letting them in. That kind of guys disrupt the atmosphere inside with their ridiculous *apaçi* dance. Still, you can stop by tomorrow if you like."

The above story took place in March 2012 in Istanbul, and it was my first time in the field for my research on the *apaçi youth*. It largely illuminates how an amorphous body of young people is perceived by a part of the society and how a set of undesired qualities are attributed to them by using the label *apaçi* as a shortcut.

This thesis draws on an ethnographic study in which I followed the peculiar ways lower class male youth carve out spaces for themselves in the society and negotiate their subjectivities by differentiating themselves from others mainly through style. *Apaçi* was the keyword I went after in the fieldwork.

Apaçi is a recently-popularized concept in Turkey, which emerged as a pejorative label used by urban middle classes to refer to some youth with distinct cultural practices from more disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, yet strikingly it has been adopted as an identity by some of these young people. Therefore, in this thesis, I differentiate between the two senses of the term: *apaçi as a derogatory label* and *apaçi as a form of self-expression*. The former usage is a familiar one in the Turkish context as it is just another link in the decades-old narrative that looks down upon the appearances and tastes of lower classes. *Apaçi* marks the beginning of a new episode, as the practices and styles (musical tastes, subjectivities, forms of visual self-expression from spectacular clothes to hairstyles etc.) that are becoming increasingly popular among lower class youth point to a significant break. This thesis is an attempt to make some coherent sense of these new cultural practices popular among these groups forging a link between macro-level transformations and everyday experiences.

This Master's thesis project appealed to me for a number of reasons. First; I have been observing a generational consciousness among young people who grew up in the late 80s and in the early 90s; a "generation" which I am a member of. This (my) generation criticizes and looks down upon younger ones arguing that they are growing up in a superficial and artificial world due to the rapid technological and socioeconomic transformations. It is true that the penetration of technology into our lives as well as the neoliberal restructuring of the Turkish society have brought about significant changes. It is also true that younger generations are developing distinct tastes and forms of self-expression. Therefore, instead of engaging in nostalgic contemplations in a social networking website, I wanted to look at what is going on among "the new youth". Second; these new forms of self-expression among lower class youth point to a significant, and seemingly sudden, break with the former ones; and thus the prospect of looking at the dynamics inherent in the process and its connection with the macro-level transformations was quite appealing. Third; as I indicated in the previous paragraph, there are people who self-identify as *apaçi* although it initially emerged and gained widespread circulation as a derogatory label. Thus, it was appealing to take a closer look at the struggle between social classes over meaning and markers of prestige; the "struggle for possession of the sign which extends to even the most mundane areas of everyday life" (Hebdige, 1979:17).

Apaçi is a concept that can carry positive or negative significance depending on the context. This discursive contestation is not only between social classes; pejorative and positive qualities are also being attributed to the concept *within* the lower classes. While some subscribe to the set of negative implications of the concept and reject being called *apaçi*, others adopt it as an identity and a form of self-expression. In this thesis, I sometimes use terms like *apaçi culture*, *apaçi youth* or *apaçi style* in a wider meaning to refer to the novel elements of style observed among lower class youth that transcend the existing signifiers of the society. For there is a visible trend among them manifested through novel forms of musical taste, modes of visibility and self-expression, and patterns of urban mobility; and this trend finds its most viable expression in "*the*" apaçi style. For this reason, no matter whether spectacular young people from lower classes identify as *apaçi* or not, I tend to use the term *apaçi* in a wider meaning to refer to the elements of the recent trend among lower class youth, while at the same time acknowledging the differences as to how the term is perceived.

The structure of the thesis goes as follows: After explaining my methodology, in Chapter 2; I situate *apaçi* in a historical context, by briefly commenting on the history of discursive dichotomies between "civilized" and "uncivilized" bodies/ways of being in modern Turkey, discussing two important concepts –*kıro* and *maganda*- that have been invented and put into circulation for similar exclusionary purposes in dominant discourses in Turkey, and conveying the elements of *apaçi as a derogatory label*. In Chapter 3; I briefly review the relevant literature on youth, and then discuss how the category of youth is constructed in the Turkish society as well as the disparities in the social expectations from young males and females. Chapter 4 constitutes the largest part of the thesis. Drawing on my fieldwork, I discuss the new forms of self-expression among urban lower class youth by also demonstrating how they negotiate their subjectivities in the face of the neoliberal restructuring and its effects in the urban space as well as in the texture of the society. More clearly, in this chapter, I discuss this novel phenomenon as an outcome of the operation of young people's creative agencies within the framework mainly shaped by (1) the Turkish variant of neoliberalism experienced in the recent decades and its concomitant celebrity culture, (2) the legacies of the history of discursive exclusion of the urban lower classes and the "*arabesk* culture", (3) the transformations in the duration and the nature of the category of youth, and (4) the inflow of hip hop and dance/club cultures mainly through the internet and through the

mediation of Turkish migrant youth living in the Western Europe. Finally, in Conclusion, I keep trying to make sense of the *apaçi* culture, and wrap up and evaluate the entire discussion.

1.1.   Methodological Considerations

The research that this thesis draws on was conducted as a "multi-sited ethnography" (Marcus, 1995), since in the research I primarily "followed" the contrasting characteristics and meanings attributed to the concept of *apaçi* varying both spatially and temporally. As the target of the research was to find out how the notion is being constructed, perceived, mutated and extended by different agents; I visited different sites and conducted interviews with different people who actively participate in the above processes.

As I conveyed in the Introduction, *apaçi* is a concept that can carry positive or negative significance depending on the context. For this reason, with an eye and ear for the concept, I carried out a research on the web where the contrasting meanings of the concept are produced and negotiated. I identified Eksisozluk[1] as one of my sites, since it is a medium where mostly young urban middle class people express their opinions. It provided ample data on the creation and modification of meanings attributed to the concept of *apaçi* with over one thousand relevant entries written by different people. Almost all of the entries reflected their authors' views of *apaçi* as a pejorative concept. Throughout the thesis, I used these data not as my primary material, but as a base through which I contextualized the spectacular forms of self-expression emerged recently among lower class youth.

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[1] *Eksisozluk* (www.eksisozluk.com) is an online "dictionary" based on the contribution of its users. It is, however, different from conventional dictionaries, since users are not required to be "correct" in a dictionary mode. It is currently one of the most popular websites in Turkey. Its closest English-language counterpart could be Urban Dictionary (www.urbandictionary.com).

I conducted my fieldwork between March and September 2012 mainly in Istanbul. As part of the fieldwork, I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with six young men. They all agreed to talk about the new forms of self-expression among youth in general, and the concept of *apaçi* in particular. All of them come from working class or lower-middle class families. Though each has different styles, five of them embody different elements of the contemporary forms of musical and visual self-expression, whereas the other one (Mehmet) is critical of these new styles. Two (Müslüm and Berkay) of the first five self-identify as *apaçi*, two (Ahmet and Alp) are somewhat neutral, and the other one (Yasin) refuses to be called *apaçi* although he admits that people usually call him as such due to his appearance and lifestyle.

Apart from these formal interviews, I also followed the "technologies of spectacularization"; and thus visited clubs, cafes, hair salons and dress shops that sell spectacular clothes; and in these visits, I had brief conversations with many people in different occasions and in different contexts.

At the beginning, I set out with the aim of interviewing those young people who self-identify as *apaçi*, but then I observed that the boundaries of the concept are highly blurry; that is, even two friends who have very similar styles and lifestyles may differ in their identifications; because of the negative connotations of the label in the mainstream discourse. For this reason, although I still kept *apaçi* at the center of my focus, I decided to interview other young people with spectacular styles by extending the scope of the concept. In other words, I identified certain themes; certain elements of style and modes of self-expression that mark contemporary lower class male youth, and then started to "follow" them in order to be able to grasp the dynamics inherent in the process regardless of whether one self-identifies as *apaçi* or not.

In the process, Facebook in a sense served as my gatekeeper. I met Müslüm, Yasin and Ahmet on Facebook. I arranged "offline" meetings with Müslüm and Yasin, whereas I interviewed Ahmet online. Besides, I became friends or subscribed to the posts of other people; I became member of groups, liked the pages of clubs, DJs, dancers and rappers, and followed "Facebook celebrities". In this respect, Facebook served for my research as a significant field site. Apart from learning about the interests or following the posts of my interlocutors such as Müslüm and Yasin, Facebook also helped me keep in contact with them.

I firstly met Müslüm; he was the only one who replied to the messages I sent to dozens of different people on Facebook. I thought he would be my gatekeeper, but it did not work in the end. The problem with using Facebook as a tool for reaching potential interviewees is that apparently most people just ignore the proposal. I experienced a similar problem in the real-world field sites; I met many people in cafes, hair salons or on the streets, but most of them did not show interest in sparing their time to have an in-depth interview; probably because of the fact that they did not have much leisure time to spend for such a "boring" activity as I mostly met them in their free days. Also, understandably, perhaps they did not trust a stranger, or simply the topic was not interesting enough. Three times, for example, I exchanged phone numbers with young men to meet later to talk, but they just did not answer my calls. Therefore, I had to content myself most of the time with brief conversations or simply observing. In short, I can say that while the observation was easy in terms of logistics, interviews were the tough part.

The fact that I grew up in a working class family living in a squatter district in Ankara complicated the insider-outsider dichotomy during the fieldwork. Although I foresaw at the beginning that I could speak a "common language" and easily build rapport with my interlocutors, and it was indeed of help; I also encountered a "generational" difference. The age difference does not seem too big (8 years at most), but I observed that there are considerable differences between our practices and ways of making sense of the world. Even so, I think that the class background united us in terms of similar, or at least familiar, life experiences.

In our interactions, they saw me and addressed me as *abi* (lit. big brother). The significance of *abi* in the Turkish society is largely positive; it is seen as not-yet-adult and therefore congenial, and at the same time as more experienced in life and therefore respectable. For these reasons, I believe that I managed to build rapport with them to a great extent, yet still I was a university-graduate outsider.

In the thesis, I use the data I collected from my interviews with Müslüm and Yasin as the two pillars. To put it another way, they are the two main characters of the story I am narrating here.

Müslüm (Picture 1), or his Facebook profile name Apaçi Müslüm (18), lives in Çayırbaşı, a Roma neighborhood in the district of Sarıyer, Istanbul. I met him on

Facebook and visited his neighborhood three times between April and July, 2012. We also chatted online several times. At the time of our first interview, he was working as a fisherman. However, he left that job and after a while started working at a café as *nargileci* (serving hookah). He told me that he constantly switches between different jobs, which he sees as something positive as this flexibility has enabled him to learn about different occupations. Our first meeting was in a random café in his neighborhood, whereas the second and third were in the café he was then working. I spent some time with him in his neighborhood and observed that he is a sociable and popular young man. As his Facebook name suggests, he self-identifies as *apaçi*. His greatest hobby is dancing, which he thinks is among the distinctive characteristics of *apaçis*. The flexibility of his body is the other *flexibility* in his life that he is proud of (cf. Martin, 1995). He is one of the main characters of this thesis, not only because he is very talkative and articulate (I interviewed him three times; each lasted more than one hour) but also he embodies most elements of the contemporary spectacular youth culture as he is into dancing, club environments and dance music, and he loves attracting the attention of others and standing out from crowds mainly through his appearance.

Picture 1. Apaçi Müslüm

Yasin (20), or his "stage name" McKarizma (Picture 2), on the other hand, is the other main character, because he is also a well-groomed young man and more importantly he is an amateur arabesk rapper based in Ankara. Initially, I watched his videos and liked his fan page on Facebook. When I went to Ankara to visit my family, I requested a meeting and he accepted. We had the interview in a café he picked in his neighborhood (Keçiören). He was a little distrustful at the beginning and probably this is why he showed up in the company of two of his friends. The interview lasted around one and a half hour. We kept talking online after I returned to Istanbul. As I discuss in *Section 4.4.1* in more detail, arabesk rap has recently gained widespread popularity among lower class youth in Turkey, and thus it is among the most significant components of contemporary lower class youth culture. As a sub-genre of hip-hop, it brings together rap and *arabesk*, the genre that has been popular among rural migrants especially in the 1980s and the 1990s.

Picture 2. Yasin – McKarizma

Apart from Müslüm and Yasin; I interviewed Berkay (18), a friend of Müslüm who also self-identifies as *apaçi*; Ahmet (20), who became popular in the social media as the "hairdresser of *apaçis*"; Mehmet (18), who is critical of the *apaçi* style; and Alp

(24), who works in a dress shop that sells spectacular clothes for low prices. In the thesis, I convey quotes also from other people I met and tell stories of my experiences and encounters in the fieldwork. I briefly introduce the context and people when referring to them.

I did not plan at the beginning of the fieldwork to limit the scope of the research to male youth. However, the above-mentioned gatekeeper problem hindered me from talking to young females. As I discuss in *Section 3.2*, the parental and social control over young women is much stricter in the Turkish context especially among the lower classes, and this is why the number of women is very low within the circles of spectacular youth. In other words, participation in what Müslüm calls "the youth life" is almost exclusively a male thing. Still, I planned to talk to a female *apaçi*, to whom Müslüm was going to introduce me, in order to be able to have an idea about how it is perceived and experienced in the everyday life; however, unfortunately she eventually decided not to talk to me. Therefore, despite the male-dominated nature of my field, I acknowledge that this is a shortcoming for this thesis. Thus, I confined the scope of the thesis to the male youth. In other words, this thesis reflects the everyday experiences and interactions of lower class male youth with the recently-emerged spectacular modes of self-expression.

CHAPTER 2

SITUATING APAÇI IN A HISTORICAL CONTEXT

2.1. A History of Encounters of "The Modern" and "The Uncivilized"

"Turkey has had a very long tradition of ruling elites which, since the end of the 19th century, have been engaged in reforming, modernizing and secularizing Turkish society" (Göle, 1997:47). This ruling elite, after the birth of the Republic, implemented a top-down modernization project, which was aimed at initiating a radical transformation not only at the institutional but also at social and cultural levels.[2] "Modernity, in their conception, was a total project. They were not satisfied simply with increasing rationality, bureaucratization, and organizational efficiency; they also professed a need for social transformation in order to achieve secularization, autonomy for the individual, and the equality of men and women" (Keyder, 1997:37). As part of this ardent project and within the atmosphere it created, certain values attributed to the "civilized West" were imported and put into circulation from the way people dressed to the manners they behaved. "Official populism tried to bring the appearance of society into conformity with 1930s European standards by eliminating differences in the dress between the bureaucrat and the man in the street. To go out to the streets meant to represent the modern image of the country [...] so the streets were organised like shopwindows of the society" (Sümer, 34).

The newborn Republic embarked on a large-scale project of modernizing the masses mainly through educational and cultural institutions. The Village Institutes[3] experiment (1937-1946), for example, was a tool of the state elite through which they

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[2] For Turkish modernization, see Zürcher (1993) and Keyder (1997).

[3] For the Village Institutes experiment, see Karaömerlioğlu (1998) and Keleş (2007).

"sought to disseminate the image of the new 'Turk' into rural masses" (Keleş, 2007:8), since a substantial portion of the population was living in villages, and the economy was based on agriculture. The main objective of these Village Institutes was to train teachers who would be sent back to villages as "missionaries of scientific enlightenment and progress" (Stirling, 1965:276). Similarly, during the early Republican era, People's Houses[4] were opened by the government throughout the country with the aim of enlightening the people by offering free courses in areas such as literature, fine arts and handicrafts, and popularizing the modernization ideals.

In a nutshell, the modernizing elite in the early years of the Turkish Republic drew clear lines between "the civilized" and "the backward", and attempted to achieve a large-scale transformation in line with the perceived Western values through several legal, institutional and cultural reforms. However, these efforts did not make the desired effects in a large part of the society, and the gap between "civilized" urban dwellers and "not-yet-civilized" rural people gradually widened.

But the real contact between these two groups took place as large masses from rural towns began to migrate to big cities.[5] "Until 1950, it was primarily an urban elite that ruled Turkey. The Democratic Party, ushered in by rural votes, supported the modernization of agriculture, which, together with industrialization centered on the Marmara Region, would result in large-scale rural-to-urban migration, irretrievably transforming Turkish society" (Neyzi, 2001:418). Villagers who migrated to cities, especially to Istanbul, formed *gecekondu* (squatter) neighborhoods in and around cities. The following two decades would be marked by widespread politicization of people, especially of youth (Neyzi, 2001), and the division of the society into two opposed camps of "rightists" and "leftists". Until the end of the 1970s, despite radical transformations observed in the texture of cities and although there was a rising feeling prevalent among the urban elite that "their cities were invaded by the 'barbarian within'" (Neyzi, 2001: 418), the difference between the culture of upper-middle class urbanites and that of those who had come from the rural Turkey "has not been transformed into a serious conflict" (Sümer, 2003:37).

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[4] For People's Houses in Turkey, see Öztürkmen (1994) and Şimşek (2005)

[5] For rural to urban migration in Turkey; see, Karpat (1976) and Erman (2001).

During the era of import-substitution developmentalism prior to the transition to an export-led growth model initiated by Turgut Özal in 1980[6], as Yonucu (2008:54) points out; *gecekondu* (squatter) people and culture were seen "by social scientists, journalists and state elites of Turkey" as part of their perception of "society in binary terms –traditional/modern, rural/urban, advanced/backward". In this discourse, lower classes (*gecekondu* people) were regarded as newcomers who would eventually turn into civilized urbanites. However, at the same time, they "gained some respect as those who contributed to the industrialization process of the country [as] they provided a cheap means of meeting the labor deficit at the time" (Yonucu, 2008:55).

The 1980 Military Coup in Turkey triggered a radical transformation in the Turkish society. "By dissolving political and social opposition, the coup provided the necessary political environment for the shift from the import substitution industrialization that framed economic policy since the 1960s to an export-oriented economics" (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2009). In the atmosphere created by the military coup and the concomitant economic reforms aimed at liberalizing the Turkish economy, Istanbul became a symbol of Turkey's integration into global markets and the hegemonic neoliberal policies aimed at turning Istanbul into a "global city"[7] by ousting large-scale factories from the city center –*gecekondu* districts- and embarking on a project of transforming the city center into a web of –gentrified- spaces designed for the pleasures of businessmen, tourists and upper class consumers. Thus, the *gecekondu* people ceased to be the central labor force of the economic system and began to "constitute a '*peripheral*' labor force" (Yonucu, 2008:55). This neoliberal shift has brought about a change in the dominant discourse on the urban poor.

Throughout the last three decades, significant shifts have been observed in the ways lower-class city-dwellers are described by the producers of the dominant discourse –the media, academics, government officials-, and new terms have been invented. For example, the term "*varoş*", a Hungarian-origin word that was "first used to denote the neighborhood outside the city walls (Erman, 2001:996), replaced "*gecekondu*", by removing the implication of inclusion inherent in the *gecekondu* discourse and installing

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[6] For the impacts of economic policies initiated by Turgut Özal in Turkey; see Öniş (2004) and Coşar and Yeğenoğlu (2009).

[7] See; Sassen (2001), Keyder and Öncü (1994).

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a characterization of the urban poor "as both culturally and politically marginal people who are unable to modernize" (Yonucu, 2008:56). In this discourse, "the *varoslu* are the economically deprived (the deprivation may be relative or absolute) and impoverished lower classes who tend to engage in criminal activities and radical political actions directed against the state. [...] The *varoslu* are defined in terms of both the economic dimension (the poor) and the social-political dimension (the rebellious, the outlaw, the misfit)." (Erman, 2001:996). The emphasis of the *varoş* discourse on "the impassible boundaries between *varoş* culture and so-called city culture points to the move from a more corporatist form of governance, which aimed at an homogenous social unity through the assimilation of 'marginal' identities into a secular, modern, middle class Turkish identity, to a neoliberal type of governance that is more concerned with exclusion" (Yonucu, 2008:58). In conjunction with this discourse, the terms "other Turkey" and "Black Turks" began to be used to refer to those who do not conform to the typology of the ideal Turkish citizen, "The White Turk".

As is seen above, people who had come from rural areas to the city and their culture(s) have always been seen as a problem that needs to be addressed in dominant discourses in Turkey. The feeling that the decency and purity of the life and culture in the city is being "threatened" and "contaminated" by the "alien within" who are unaware of the rules of conduct has always manifested itself in different forms and through different discursive tools. In the following section, I will present two pejorative labels, namely *maganda*[8] and *kıro*[9], which I argue are the predecessors of today's *apaçi*.

2.2. Labels of Kıro and Maganda as the Predecessors of Apaçi

The reflection of the exclusion in everyday life in Turkey on the language should be seen as the conflation of various undesired qualities attributed to certain groups in

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[8] For detailed discussions on *maganda*; see Öncü (1999) and Öncü (2002).

[9] For more on the epithet *kıro*; see Ergin (2012) and Sümer (2003)

the society such as the poor, Kurds, the Roma, and so forth, into single pejorative labels/prototypes. Especially due to the thirty years of armed conflict between Turkish security forces and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the migration of hundreds of thousands of Kurdish people to big cities in the 1990s as a result of the forced displacement policy of the government, the "invasion" discourse has increasingly intermingled with the discourse of "Kurdish invasion" in big cities, which paved the way for a new anti-Kurdish language (Saracoğlu, 2009) and for increased "Kurdification" of "the excluded other". Thus, the labels/prototypes of *maganda* and *kıro*, which are used mostly interchangeably, have strong pejorative implications for Kurdish people living in Turkey.

Kıro is a pejorative label that became popular in the 1990s. Description written by a user of Urban Dictionary successfully reflects a summary of the negative implications of *kıro*: "Turkish slang word to describe ignorant, rude, sometimes criminal group of people who drive modified heapy [sic] cars, listen to arabesk music[10], wear white socks under black pants. It also means in Kurdish small boy"[11]. An interviewee of Saracoglu (2010:255) states the following while talking about how the city she lives in (Izmir) has become more and more dangerous for her after the arrival of (Kurdish) migrants:

> In the past, I used to take a walk in Konak[12] at night without any concern or fear. Now, I cannot walk there. You know those people we call 'kıro', the people from the East. They fill these places. They follow us; make passes at us. They are Kurds. When you hear the way they speak, you easily realize who they are. Or you can immediately get this from their face and appearance. There is well dressed and badly dressed. We can distinguish between the two.

Ergin (2012:9) summarizes the connection between Kurdishness and the term *kıro*: "In popular culture, Kurdishness is associated with a prototype combining culture and physical features: the *kıro*. In Turkish humor magazines, the uncivilized characters with dark skin and hairy bodies always turn out to be Kurds, sometimes euphemistically called Easterners".

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[10] For arabesk music and "arabesk culture"; see Özbek (1997), Markoff (1994), Stokes (1992) and Stokes (1994).
[11] http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=kiro (December 14, 2012)
[12] Konak is a central square in Izmir.

A similar label emerged also in the 1990s is *maganda*. It is an "invented word which began to circulate insistently and repetitively through daily life in Istanbul in the 1990s" (Öncü, 2002:172). In the popular culture of the 1990s in Turkey, such prototypes were almost exclusively male represented mostly with "abundant facial and body hair [and as people who] are super-sexual in a threatening manner" (Apaydın, 2005:118). Besides, what is emphasized while representing the *maganda* is his unconformity to the space he occupies such as a beach, a downtown park or café, or the television screen. As Öncü (2002:183) puts it; "by the mid-1990s, the word maganda had entered mainstream language as an all-encompassing epithet to describe and identify a 'publicly' offensive other who actively intrudes to contaminate the public spaces he occupies". What makes a maganda dangerous, in this discourse, is his undesired and unfitting presence in spaces in which he does not belong. Not only did he "invaded" the city coming from his village, now he also transgresses the boundaries designated for him within the city and "contaminates" the public spaces of urban life.

To summarize, the above-presented shifts in terminology in the way the urban elite in Turkey has referred to those who migrated from rural areas mainly to Istanbul hinge on the general "hegemonic" (Öncü, 2002:184) narrative of cities' invasion by outsiders. At first, it was "peasants", who had been praised during the early Republican era as "the masters of the nation", who migrated to cities in the 1950s. Then, they started to be referred to as *gecekondu people*; a term which simultaneously implied that they were not-yet-civilized people who would eventually integrate into the urban culture but at the same time they deserved respect as they formed the central labor force of the developing country. In the late-1980s, the term *gecekondu* began to lose its currency and be replaced by *varoş*, which was based more on exclusion rather than inclusion, and people who constituted it began to be stigmatized through the labels of *maganda* and *kıro*.

Beyza Sümer (2003:81:82), in her thesis on the historical background and current manifestations of the discursive aspect of the dichotomy between high and low cultures, or "White and Black Turks"; discusses how the ideal modern individual is constructed in Turkey against the typology of maganda, and suggests that "the so-called significant characteristics of maganda such as having a moustache, eating *lahmacun* and listening to arabesk music have become the objects of symbolic hate". That is, the stereotype of maganda offended the five senses of civilized urbanites through the way

he looked, the music genre –*arabesk*- he listened to, the food -*lahmacun*- he ate, his bad smell, and his unwanted touch in public places. Towards the end of 2008, however, a new typology became popular under the label "*apaçi*". In what follows, I will describe this new term in relation to its predecessors and the prevailing conditions in the contemporary Istanbul.

2.3. Emergence of Apaçi as the Newest Link in the Decades-Old Exclusionary Discourse

The Turkish urban public sphere has recently been witnessing the emergence and evolution of the concept of *apaçi*. My argument is that *apaçi* has become the new label, replacing its predecessors, of third-generation youngsters whose families migrated from rural towns all over Turkey to the metropole. It stemmed from the belief, prevalent among middle class urbanites, that the decency and purity of the life and culture in the urban space is being "threatened" and "contaminated" by these "aliens" who are unaware of the rules of conduct. While it used to be an obscure concept used only in the slang to denote gypsies; in 2009, the popularity of the concept skyrocketed through a Facebook group entitled "*A New Apaçi Each Day*"[13], which was followed by hundreds of thousands Facebook users, who uploaded "*apaçi*" photos to the group and commented on these photos. This was the breaking point for the adventure of the meanings/qualities attributed to the concept, since the group immediately popularized it and brought it to the everyday languages of much larger masses. The concept began to describe certain people who can be recognized by their appearances, hairstyles, accessories, mobile phones, behaviors, languages, and so forth. The traditional media started to use the concept as late as towards the end of 2010, and the concept has taken its most recent shape after the Hürriyet Daily used the concept in its headline after the

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[13] This Facebook group was shut down after a while, although various other replicas have been initiated later. Therefore, I do not currently have access to the number of the members of the original group and to some of the photos and photo comments published by the group.

2011 New Year's Eve, which read in large sizes, "33 *Apaçis* Taken into Custody" to refer to the molesters who were taken into custody by the police in Istanbul (Picture 3).

Picture 3. *Hürriyet's* **front page on 2 January 2011**

The pejorative and exclusionary discourse on *apaçi*s is reproduced especially on social networking websites and internet "dictionaries" such as Eksisozluk[14]. Among the common qualities attributed to *apaçis* on the web are that they wear fake-branded clothes imitating rich people, they want to draw attention by doing meaningless things, they always move in groups, they should be avoided when spotted, they invade pristine

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[14] *Eksisozluk* (www.eksisozluk.com) is an online "dictionary" based on the contribution of its users. It is, however, different from conventional dictionaries, since users are not required to be "correct" in a dictionary mode. It is currently one of the most popular websites in Turkey. Its closest English-language counterpart could be Urban Dictionary (www.urbandictionary.com).

urban spaces and disturb others by mainly molesting women, and they look like a different species. As Necmi Erdoğan (Birgün, 7 August 2012) puts it "*apaçi* in this discourse is constructed as the object of a secular rite of stoning the devil or of symbolic lynching". There is also an expanding discourse among the users of these media on how to enjoy the city without having to "come into contact" with *apaçis*. They exchange their ideas about neighborhoods where *apaçis* live[15], places that are "invaded" by them, and "*apaçi*-free" districts[16]. They label those cafes, bars or coastal districts as "hotbeds of *apaçis*" (*apaçi mekanı*) and fervently try to distinct themselves from lower classes. This may be the reason why the owner of the daytime dance club that I described at the beginning of this article got uncomfortable when I referred to his club as somewhere frequented by *apaçis*. Similarly, I interviewed a 20-year-old hairdresser –Ahmet- who became famous on social media as "the hairdresser of *apaçis*" (*apaçi kuaförü*)[17]. He expressed his discomfort with being called as such, but he also stated that he swallowed it as he aspired to prove himself and this fame gave him that chance.

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[15] They list the working-class, or *varoş*, neighborhoods as the living spaces of *apaçi*: http://beta.eksisozluk.com/apacilerin-yasam-alanlari--2412037 (Dec 13, 2012).

[16] Some list upper-middle class neighborhoods as *apaçi*-free places, whereas some others write "There is no such a place": http://beta.eksisozluk.com/apacilerin-yasam-alanlari--2412037 (Dec 13, 2012). One contributor goes further and shares the map of Istanbul that supposedly shows the spatial distribution of *apaçi*s: http://img125.imageshack.us/img125/9017/istanbullmpenharitasi2.jpg (Dec 13, 2012).

[17] His Facebook name is "*Çılgın Kuaför Ahmet*" (Crazy Hairdresser). He is an enthusiastic entrepreneur who takes photos of his works and publishes them on his Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/CILGINKUAFORAHMET?ref=ts&fref=ts (Dec 13, 2012).

Picture 4. One of early popular *Apaçi* photos that circulate on the web.

In these accounts on the social media, the adjective "strange" (*garip*) is the keyword and an inability to make sense of what is going on is evident. This inability stems from the decades-old representation of the lower classes, which is equated with rural migrants, as non-modern and backward. Traditional and rural forms of appearance and manners were attributed to the lower classes as the characteristics that hinder their integration to the modern urban life. However, this time, traditional elements are absent in the appearance and practices of the *apaçi* youth; and here lies the difference of *apaçi* from its predecessors; *kıro* and *maganda*. They listen to hip-hop, trance or electro music instead of folk songs or arabesk; they wear tidy and stylish clothes along with spectacular sunglasses and carefully-done ostentatious hairstyles; they perform Western dances to Western music, and so forth. Apparently, they "stole" the markers of prestige

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and status such as sunglasses or fancy brand names and appropriated them into their own styles. Yes, they are spectacular and pretentions; but their "strangeness" does not primarily stem from their ways of utilizing these markers of prestige. Instead, the "strangeness" mainly stems from the perceived incompatibility between the "backward" social classes and the cultural practices that are deemed modern and Western. In short, the emergence of the *apaçi* style represented a disruption of the symbolic order of the society, and thus, the term *apaçi* became an epithet for lower class youth who transcend the visual and spatial worlds that they are supposed to belong.

Another difference of *apaçi* from its predecessors is that although the label was first put into circulation by urban middle classes through various social media like Facebook as a pejorative concept; what is surprising is that this label has been embraced by some of these very people, who are ridiculed, as a distinctive identity and a way of asserting their presence in the urban and cyber space. This discursive contestation is not only between social classes, pejorative and positive qualities are also being attributed to the *apaçi* concept *within* the lower classes. While some subscribe to the set of negative implications of the concept and reject being called *apaçi*, others adopt it as a form of self-expression. No matter whether spectacular young people from lower classes identify as *apaçi* or not, there is a visible trend among them manifested through novel forms of musical taste, modes of self-expression and patterns of urban mobility; and this trend finds its most viable expression in the *apaçi* style.

CHAPTER 3

HOW TO STUDY THE APAÇI YOUTH

3.1. Studies on Youth in the Literature: How to Address the Apaçi Youth?

Studies on youth cultures and identities in the literature are in consensus that "youth" as a separate category lacks a clear definition. As Comaroff and Comaroff (2005:19) note, "there has long been a tendency in the public discourse of the West to speak of youth as a transhistorical, transcultural category. As if it has existed everywhere and at all times in much the same way". However, chronological age is not always the main determinant of who should belong to the category of youth, that is, the boundaries of this life stage may differ from one social setting to another. Moreover, youth as a distinct category in one's lifespan did not always exist in earlier societies. As Valentine et al. (2005:2) suggests, "children were treated as miniature adults [in the Middle Ages], rather than as conceptually different from adults" after noting that the historian Aries (1962) observed that "children" were missing from medieval icons in the Middle Ages. "The emergence of 'youth' as a distinct category and stage in the lifecycle is linked to the history of modernity in Europe" (Neyzi, 2001:411). In other words, the emergence of "youth" –and "childhood"- as a separate category is linked to various developments in early modern Europe such as "the development of formal education and the belief that children required long periods of schooling before they could take on adult roles and responsibilities" (Prout and James 1990; quoted by Valentine et al. 2005:3). Then, initially, it was kind of a luxury for upper classes to be able to allow their offspring to undergo the processes called "childhood" and "youth". However, developments like compulsory education and regulations against child labour paved the way for universal use of the concepts of "childhood" and "youth".

Due to this complicated nature of defining youth, Durham (2000) borrows the concept of "shifter" from linguistics to account for the concept: "A shifter is a special

kind of deictic or indexical term, a term that works not through absolute referentiality to a fixed context, but one that relates the speaker to a relational, or indexical, context ("here" or "us" are such terms)" (Durham, 2000:116). "Definitions and notions of children and youth cannot, therefore, be simply based on biology and chronological age" (De Boeck and Honwana, 2005:4). Thus, the concept of youth does not signify the same meaning in different cultural contexts, one has to take into consideration the peculiarities of the context in/for which it is used.

Youth is conceptualized by dominant public discourses generally in two different ways: one views young individuals as sources of threat and trouble for the wider society who need to be controlled, whereas the other considers them as the hope for a better future. Indeed, these two approaches often overlap: "Youth are complex signifiers, simultaneously idealizations and monstrosities, pathologies and panaceas" (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2005:20). These conceptualizations stem from the definition of youth as a biological age group that is not influenced by historical and social conditions (Yentürk et al., 2005:5). Valentine et al. (2005:4) argue that the increased preoccupation of the middle classes throughout the nineteenth century with the need to "control working class youth as well as their own offspring" paved the way for attributing an undisciplinary and unruly nature to youth, which resulted in framing youth cultures "in moral panics about 'gangs', juvenile crime, violence and so on". As De Boeck and Honwana (2005:2) suggests, "They [children and youth] are often constructed from the outside and from above as a 'problem' or a 'lost generation' in 'crisis'". The following quote from Deborah Chambers (2005:10) effectively summarizes the conceptualization of "youth as trouble":

> Adolescents began to be treated as a problem for society after the Second World War, during a period in which young men, in particular, were gaining cultural and economic independence from their family of origin. The history of academic research about youth cultures reflects and reinforces the public condemnation of working class adolescents. Academic interest in teenagers was born within criminology, fuelled by moral panics concerning the nuisance value of young people on the urban streets of Western societies. Thus, the research into youth groups was marked by a preoccupation with delinquency and associated with the study of other so-called 'condemned' and 'powerless' groups in society such as the working class, migrants and the criminal.

The conceptualizations of youth as "trouble" and as "hope for the future" are linked to the culturally universal categorization of young people as "adolescents", which is the process of transition from "childhood" to "adulthood". "Children and youth have been routinely portrayed as innocent and vulnerable, in need of adult protection" (De Boeck and Honwana, 2005:3). Bucholtz (2002:529) argues that the emphasis on adolescence as a universal stage "inevitably frames young people primarily as not-yet-finished human beings", since adulthood is the real thing for which a young person should be prepared. It also implies that "adolescents" do not have any value in their own right, and that they need to listen to the instructions of "grown-ups" since they are in a preparatory stage which has already been undergone by "adults". In other words, this approach constructs young people as those who should wait for becoming adults in order to be able to participate in the social life and obtain equal rights. When youth is seen as a stage of transition to/preparation for adulthood, then conceptualizations of youth as "threat" or "hope" becomes possible. De Boeck and Honwana (2005:3) argue, based on the definitions of childhood and youth in international documents/agreements, that "children and youth [in these documents] appear as pre-social and passive recipients of experience. They are portrayed as dependent, immature and incapable of assuming responsibility, properly confined to the protection of home and school". Moreover, individuals who fall within the age group defined as "adolescence" are conceptualized based on an instrumentalization, that is, they are given value only to the extent that they are potential "saviours" of the country or that they are *assets* of a family/country on whom *investments* are made to ensure future economic well-being.

In addition, the above approach ignores the fact that the adult members of the society, who are the power-holders, determine who belongs to the category of youth, when someone becomes an "adult" and what the rites of passage are. In addition, young people, too, participate in the process of reproducing the existing power relations since they consider their position as in a transition stage. Therefore, it obscures the possibility of grasping the power relations between "young" and "adult" members of a community in defining the proper behaviors for youth. These power relations operate at another level: definitions of childhood and youth, made by adult members of a community, are heavily influenced by the Western conceptions of these categories. As De Boeck and Honwana (2005:3) show, "youngsters who do not follow

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this [the Western] path are considered either to be at risk or to pose a risk to society". They (2005:3) continue as follows:

> Children who do not readily fit within Western cultural fantasies of children as innocent and vulnerable, are quickly perceived as demonic, discontented and disorderly and are often feared and punished as a consequence. Parents who do not follow normative Western child-rearing practices are immediately seen as irresponsible.

In summation, then, the above approach is blind to the power relations operating at different levels, since it considers young people primarily to be not-yet-finished human beings whose actions are oriented towards their future adult roles.

Recent scholarship on youth in anthropology and cultural studies has been criticizing earlier approaches in that they ignored power contestations inherent to the definition and practices of youth, that they ignored the gender dimension, that they did not pay attention to the creative agency of youth, that they were politically biased and so forth. Bucholtz (2002:532), for example, urges a scholarly shift from adolescence to youth. She starts her criticism firstly by tackling the etymology of the words "adult" and "adolescent": "*Adultum* is the past participle of the Latin verb *adolescere* 'to grow (up)'. The senses of growth, transition, and incompleteness are therefore historically embedded in *adolescent*, while *adult* indicates both completion and completeness. This etymology is also reflected in the way in which the term adolescence has been put to use in the social sciences". She argues that the term "youth" "foregrounds age not as trajectory, but as identity", which is "agentive, flexible and ever-changing", and removes the implications like "not-yet-finished" individuals and like "adolescence as a prolonged search for identity". The shift from adolescence to youth will enable researchers to examine young people's practices and ways of expression not from an adult-centered and Western-centered perspective. "Where the study of adolescence generally concentrates on how bodies and minds are shaped for adult futures, the study of youth emphasizes instead the here-and now of young people's experience, the social and cultural practices through which they shape their worlds" (Bucholtz, 2002:532).

In the "adolescence" approach, young individuals are constructed as those who are responding to the structural forces, thus, this approach ignores the agency and creative contributions of young individuals to larger structures. As De Boeck and Honwana (2005:3) suggest, "young people constantly shake and shape society but are also shaped and shaken by it". Therefore, the perspective should recognize young people's agency instead of examining youth practices to the extent that they deviate from or comply with adult social norms. It is necessary to see youth as equally-important cultural actors, as Bucholtz (2002:532) notes, "where adolescence is usually placed in relation to adulthood, an equally salient group for youth may be other youth-that is, the peer group-and relevant age contrasts may include childhood, old age, and other culturally specific stages, in addition to adulthood to examine youth not only in relation to adolescence, but also equally to other life stages like old-age and childhood".

The above literature suggests that when youth is defined as the process of becoming adults, as adolescents, then young individuals are conceptualized as not-yet-finished individuals, whose actions are considered only in relation to their adult futures and to the norms of the society determined by adults. Then, the study of youth becomes confined to the scope of pedagogy, which ignores young people's cultural creations and strategic maneuvers. In other words, their practices are seen only as symptoms of larger social transformations or as deviations from adult social norms. However, the conceptualization of these people as "youth" rather than as "adolescents" could be the first step to recognize their identity and agency. Of course, young people's identities are flexible and constantly changing, but this is also the case for other age groups.

In this thesis, I address the working-class youth in Turkey avoiding the above-mentioned problems in, what Bucholtz (2002) calls, the "adolescence" approach and acknowledging their creative agencies. In other words, I view them not as passive recipients of macro forces, nor in terms of essentialized categories of "hope" or "threat", but as cultural actors who actively participate in social processes and construct their identities in their search for their own ways of self-construction and self-expression.

3.2. How the Category of Youth is Constructed in the Turkish Society

As suggested above, categories of childhood and youth are constructed, definitions of which usually differ from one context to another. That is, not only do the chronological boundaries of these categories, but also the attitudes and qualities attributed to them might vary. Wider Turkish culture is no exception in this regard; these categories are perceived and experienced differently by different social groups. However, it could still be argued that there exists a common understanding of an ideal "childhood" and "youth" prevalent across the society. Youth is generally seen as a period during which the individual is free from the troubles and worries of the adult life. The common expression "*gençliğini yaşayamamak*" (one's inability to live his/her youth), which is used to refer to those who become obliged to marry or enter the working life at an early age, reflects the generally accepted view that youth (and childhood) is a period of life that everyone should experience free from the responsibilities that grown-ups should burden.

The term *delikanlı* (lit. someone with wild blood), which is used to refer to mostly young men, yet also rarely to young women, endows young people with a status in the society through which their unruly behaviors are tolerated. As Neyzi (2002:415) notes, "Turkish society does acknowledge a stage of potentially unruly behavior, particularly among young men, who are referred to as *delikanlı*". While in more traditional families young women have historically been the subjects of much more strict parental and communal control especially in the areas of sexuality and visibility in the male-dominated public sphere, young men are mostly allowed in this period to "see what the adult life is like" and to become men. As "a desirable status of masculinity" (Crăciun, 2009:28), "the specific content of being a *delikanli* can be more or less socially desirable, ranging from 'brave and trustworthy' to 'wild blooded and reckless'" (Bolak Boratav, 2005:214). Kandiyoti (1994:208), based on her observations in a central Anatolian village, describes this period as follows:

> *Delikanli* (literally meaning 'those with crazy blood') referred to adolescents and young unmarried men, who enacted a version of masculinity valorizing the untamed and undomesticated. In fact, a certain amount of deviant behaviour was accepted as an inevitable

concomitant of this stage. Causing disruptions at weddings, tractor chases, pranks and minor theft produced reactions ranging from amusement to annoyance, but never incurred serious consequences. This stage came to a close with military service, which was closely followed by marriage.

As the above accounts also suggest, youth is experienced particularly by young men as a temporary period of permissiveness. The military service, which becomes compulsory for all male citizens at the age of twenty unless they continue their university education, and marriage are supposed to put an end to this period and confer adult status. However, while both men and women might acquire adult status in their teens through marriage (Neyzi, 2002:415), the duration of the period of youth can also be prolonged by postponing marriage or due to unemployment.

Bolak Boratav (2005) documents the disparities between young men and women living in *Kuştepe*, a lower class neighborhood in Istanbul, in terms of social control imposed upon them, acceptable behaviors, visibility, use of public spaces, access to education and other public resources. Although the lack of economic resources is seen as an obstacle by both the young men and women interviewed in her research in front of "living their youth", young women are much more excluded from the imagined performance of youth. In other words, it is much more possible for young men to have the restless *delikanlı* period, which echoes with the following perception of youth expressed by a 14-year-old girl in Bolak Boratav's (2005:212) study: "When I think of youth, what comes to mind is being restless, getting together with friends and going somewhere at night, to let go the pulleys, chat and gossip, tell each other your problems. We usually think of idling about, a fun environment".

CHAPTER 4

NEW FORMS OF SELF-EXPRESSION AMONG URBAN LOWER CLASS YOUTH

In this chapter, drawing on my ethnographic study, I will present and discuss the characteristics of the contemporary spectacular lifestyles, or the *apaçi* culture/style, among lower class youth. I see this novel phenomenon as an outcome of the operation of young people's creative agencies within the framework mainly shaped by (1) the Turkish variant of neoliberalism experienced in the recent decades and its concomitant celebrity culture, (2) the legacies of the history of discursive exclusion of the urban lower classes and the "*arabesk* culture", (3) the transformations in the duration and the nature of the category of *delikanlı*, and (4) the inflow of hip hop and dance/club cultures mainly through the internet and through the mediation of Turkish migrant youth living in the Western Europe.[18] I will start this chapter by resuming on my discussion of the period of being *delikanlı* in the Turkish society and presenting how it is experienced by my interlocutors.

4.1. The Category of Delikanlı as a Temporary Period of Permissiveness

As discussed in the previous chapter, the category of delikanlı endows young men with a certain degree of independence from their parents. It is, therefore, not a coincidence that the contemporary spectacular lifestyles, or the *apaçi* culture, are popular almost exclusively among young men. I argue that the nature and social

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[18] It should be noted that these four factors are not independent from each other; that is, they shape and are shaped by each other.

perception of the category of delikanlı provide a basis for the emergence of unorthodox/spectacular lifestyles among young males. The disparity in the degree of parental and social control over young men and women[19] not only tolerates a certain amount of "deviant" behavior in young men, but also allows for more participation in waged labor. Thus, young men become more able to gain a certain degree of financial independence from their parents, which provides them with a degree of freedom to have different lifestyles and leisure activities. During my ethnographic research, most of my interlocutors emphasized the importance of not being a burden to the family and how this is an important transformative factor for their relations with their parents. For example, the following words of Apaçi Müslüm illustrate the importance of economic independence from the family:

> I earn 300 Liras per week. This is a very good amount for a young person. This is why I can have fun without being a burden to my family. I mean, I spend the money that I earn. Sometimes my father complains when I drink alcohol or do something like that. He says, 'You go and waste money with women'. I say, 'What can I do? I am young!'. OK, he is my father, it is his right to be angry at me, but still he cannot change me. It may be more difficult for other young people as their families restrict their freedom.[20]

Although most young people work for very low wages in mostly temporary jobs, the money they earn serves as a very important resource for them to perform their youth identities. Without denying the fact that there are many young people and children in

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[19] This control over young women not only regulates what they can and cannot do during their youth, but also defines the boundaries of youth more strictly. While, for instance, an unmarried and/or unemployed 30-year-old man can still be regarded as 'young', the same is virtually impossible for a woman. This is of course not to say that young women do not develop their own ways of negotiating their youth. For a study on how lower class Kurdish adolescent girls living in Dolapdere neighborhood of Istanbul cope with dominant ideologies; see Ege (2011).

[20] "Ben mesela 300 milyon haftalık alıyorum bu çok iyi bir para bu yaştaki bir insan için. Bu yüzden ben aileme yük olmadan kendim eğlenebiliyorum. Ben işte o parayı bi hafta yiyorum. Çalıştığım parayı yiyorum, rahatım yani. Babam filan bana kızıyor bazen alkol aldığımda filan. Sen diyor "gidiyorsun paraları karılarla yiyorsun". Ben de "N'apıyım" diyorum yani gencim. Haa bana gelir kızar, hakkıdır, ama beni de değiştiremez. Başka bazı gençler için daha zor. Onlar bu kadar takılamazlar, aileleri filan baskı yapar. Aile terbiyesi alırlar."

Turkey who have to work in order to contribute to their family income; it is also common that some youngsters earn money only to spend for themselves. Their self-sufficiency is enough for their parents. In a brief conversation, a 17-year-old young man told me that he was currently unemployed but would start working in the following weeks when he runs out of money.

As I also discuss in Section 4.5, being self-responsible, expressed as not being a burden to the family financially (*aileye yük olmamak*), is among the most important sources of self-pride among my interlocutors. It is crucial in their construction of self as it legitimizes most of their choices. It could also be argued that it is among the many factors that steer lower class male youth away from pursuing education. For Müslüm, dropping out of school at the age of ten has not only prepared him for life but has also given him a relative independence from his family. Similarly, although Yasin's parents were at the beginning not happy with his style and rap music, they are more empathetic[21] now, as he earns his own money by arabesk rapping in various events.

As identities are expressed through consumption practices, money becomes the key. While one way of affording the "youth life" is participation in waged labor; similar to what Yonucu (2005) observed among *Zeytinburnu* youth, petty crime sometimes serves as another way.[22] My interlocutors told me stories of other young people, not of themselves, who engage in thievery and drug dealing in order to make money to cover their expenses. One example is the following quote from Müslüm:

> For example, there is this 10-year-old kid. He does not give up smoking weed everyday no matter how hard you beat him. There are many kids like this one; they steal to smoke it. Let's say, your older sister has a laptop, would you sell it and go buy weed? These kids do.[23]

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[21] "Anlayışla karşılıyorlar*"*.

[22] Involvement of young people from lower-classes in illegal activities is also observed by Bolak Boratav (2005) and Crăciun (2009).

[23] "Yok abi türkiye'nin gidişatı hiç iyi değil. Mesela 10 yaşında çocuk var, her gün döv döv ne yaparsan yap o esrarı içmekten vazgeçiyor. Senin karşında hap atıyor ya, yemin ediyorum böyle bi şey yok, dövüyosun akıllanmıyor. Bizim orda çok var mesela 10 yaşında çocuklar, bunu içebilmek için hırsızlık yapıyor çocuklar. Senin şimdi mesela ablanın laptopu var, onu satıp da esrar almaya gider misin? Onlar yapıyo işte. İşte bunlar çok var Türkiye aleminde."

As touched upon earlier, the *delikanlı* status gives young men a certain degree of freedom as some deviant behaviors are tolerated as an inevitable concomitant of this stage. Moreover, in patriarchal families, parents see the period of being *delikanlı* as a preparatory stage for adult male roles. That is, unruly behaviors of young men are seen not only as tolerable but also as desirable, as they are believed to prepare them to manhood. The following words of Yasin illustrate the above-mentioned expectations from the period of being *delikanlı*:

> I don't have problems with my parents directly; but sometimes some relatives criticize my lifestyle. Especially my maternal uncle meddles in my affairs. He disapproves of my hairstyle or my clothes, and he says, 'we were not like you when we were at your age'. Frankly, I don't care. My father, for example, does not drink alcohol; but he wants me to drink and to experience everything. He wants me to live my life, to have fun, to learn about girls, to drink alcohol; but then, at some point, to wise up and abandon that lifestyle.[24]

As is seen above, a certain degree[25] of "misbehavior" in young men is considered to be an inevitable prerequisite for the construction of the "proper" adult self. This perception echoes with the other implication of the term *delikanlı* as the "proper man". It draws the boundaries of what is socially expected and what is not of men. A *delikanlı* is a man with a strong masculinity who is brave and trustworthy. As a term loaded with sexism and homophobia, it regulates in the everyday life the traits and behaviors that are regarded by the society as manly and unmanly, and thus prepares young men to socially-acceptable masculine roles. In the following paragraphs, I will discuss how the duration

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[24] "İlla ki başka insanların aileleriyle problemleri oluyodur. Arkadaşlarım anlatıyor mesela saçıma karışıyor, kıyafetime karışıyor. Benim bak mesela direkt ailemle problemim olmaz ama akrabalarım laf ediyor, dayım mesela bana çok karışır. "saçın ne, pantolonun ne, biz böyle görmedik" gibisinden. Ama ben boyun eğmiyorum, "eskiden böyle değilmiş dayı" diyorum. Bazıları mesela dışarda saçlarını yapıyolar, eve giderken daha efendi bir görüntü takınıyorlar. Benim babam içki içmez, ama oğlum yaşasın, görsün, bitirsin der. Hayatı yaşasın, gezsin tozsun, karı kız olaylarını yaşasın, içsin; ama sonra da bunları bitirsin, bıraksın."

[25] Crăciun (2009) tells the story of a man who transgressed the acceptable limits of the *delikanlı* period.

and the content of the period of being *delikanlı* among lower class youth have been changing, and how this change pertains to the emergence and characteristics of today's *apaçi* culture.

The life stage of being *delikanlı* is constructed in a way in which the inevitable mischievousness of the young man is kept under control. Historically, "it was preferable for reasons of social control to keep the period between puberty and marriage -the period of 'wild blood'- as short as possible" (Neyzi, 2002:415). However, I observed during my fieldwork that the large-scale social transformations make it very difficult for the adult society to control the duration of this period. Not only does it start earlier due to the heightened penetration of consumer objects into the lives of lower age groups in the consumer society particularly via the internet, but also it ends later because of compulsory education, high rates of unemployment and relatively higher independence of young people from their parents. During the fieldwork, I kept hearing about how fast today's children "grow up". Alp (24), for instance, told me that he went on the streets when he was 14, and that since then there is no place he has not seen, no night club he has not been, and nothing he has not drunk or smoked. He stated the following regarding today's children:

> Today's youth grow up very fast. At the age of 5 or 6, they get acquainted with the internet. They see videos on the web like this one *[We were watching the YouTube video of a festival in Belgium which, according to Alp, is built upon drugs and sex]* and they want to be like them. They become aware of what is going on around them. Also, a 10-year-old child gets acquainted with drugs today. For example, there is this errand boy of the next-door tea house, I saw him today distributing teas and at the same time smoking pot. I was surprised and said, "Are you out of your mind". He responded, "Nothing would happen, I don't care". This is how it is now; today's children grow up very fast.[26]

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[26] "Bugünün gençleri çok çabuk büyüyor. 5-6 yaşında çocuk internetle tanışıyor. İnternette görüyor, tabii, bu bizim izlediğimiz gibi videoları (Biz o anda ortanda bulunan iki gencin gitmeyi planladığı Belçika'daki festivalin görüntülerini izliyorduk. Gençlerin anlattığına göre festival uyuşturucu ve seks üzerine kurulu.) izliyor. Netten görüyorlar, hem haberleri oluyor dünyadan, hem de özeniyorlar. Yine 10 yaşındaki çocuk uyuşturuc ile tanışıyor bugün. Bak mesela bugün şu çaycının çırağı var, bi yandan çay dağıtıyor bi yandan da esrar içiyor. Dedim oğlum manyak mısın, "ne olacak abi ya" dedi. Artık böyle yani gençler çok çabuk büyüyorlar."

Although the age at marriage rises, marriage continues to function as the end of the period of being *delikanlı*. Most of my interlocutors stated that their lifestyles would change after they get married. For example, Müslüm stated the following:

> I will give up this lifestyle when I get married. You need to pull yourself together, because you will have a family to look after. You will be much more responsible in life. You cannot leave them at home and go out partying at night. You can do it very rarely, maybe once a year.[27]

In short, it could be argued that there is an historical continuity in the perception of the *delikanlı* period as the temporary period of permissiveness, which starts when a minor gains a relative independence from his family and continues until marriage. However, its duration has been prolonged by the changes taking place at the macro level. Its nature is also undergoing a change.

In the popular discourse, *delikanlı* is defined mostly through acts and behaviors that are deemed unmanly ranging from chewing gum and smoking slim cigarettes to having long hair and wearing tight clothes. In terms of appearance; modest clothes such as dark-colored suits and coats, and simple hair and beard styles used to circulate as the markers of *delikanlı* identity, whereas unorthodox/spectacular styles used to be denounced as being "unsuitable for a *delikanlı*" (*delikanlıya yakışmaz*). However, it appears today that these confines of the *delikanlı* identity are being obliterated by the forces of the consumer society, and it is not a smooth transition. During my fieldwork, my interlocutors talked about how these categories are negotiated in their everyday lives. They experience difficulties in making their styles accepted especially among their elders. As I discuss in Section 4.4, their endless efforts to have a unique style earn them a degree of prestige and help them construct a positive self-image; however, they have to deal with the nuisances that their *difference* brings about.

The most tedious part of having a visibly different style is resisting the pressures coming from elderly relatives, employers, teachers and the wider society. As *apaçi as a*

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[27] "Evlendiğim zaman filan böyle takılmayı bırakırım. Kendine çekidüzen vermen lazım, çünkü ailen var onlara bakman lazım. Sen gideceksin evden gece vakti onlar ne yapacak. Haa ne olur, kırk yılda bir olur, senede bir olur mesela."

derogatory label suggests, tastes and styles of these young people are already constantly ridiculed and/or exoticized by middle class urbanites. However, young people have to negotiate their unusual styles and demeanors within their social class as well. For example, *Çılgın Kuaför* (Crazy Hairdresser) Ahmet states the following regarding the challenges faced by young people:

> The only thing they say is, "There is no arguing about tastes and colors", and they just do not care. Now, the number of such young people is on the rise, even little boys have their hair done. Some parents attribute such desires to their youth and tolerate them, whereas some young people wear stylish hairstyles running the risk of getting beaten up by their elders. On the way back home, they wash their hair in cold water in a mosque or somewhere. But they never give up. Of course, they hear insults in their neighborhoods or workplaces such as "Are you a clown?" or "Are you a fag?" but they do not care. I don't know, somehow they handle it. I can say that today six out of ten young men have this *apaçi* style. There is a struggle between them and their parents, and I have to say that youth are winning that struggle.[28]

Yasin, similarly, tells the story of how he managed to make his style accepted among his elders:

> I worked in a real estate agency, my boss was a women. She would say, "Either put down your hair, or get it cut". But one should not judge a person by his looks, what matters is what is inside. I did not comply with her and tried to do my best in my work. When you do your job well, people get used to the way you look. I think those days are gone. You know, elders always talk about how they were not free to be as they

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[28] Benim çevreme ilgi çekici gözükme gibi derdim yok ama onlar herkes bizi konuşsun kızlar falan bizi dedikodu yapsın benim de kızlarla dolu çevrem olsun derdindeler. Onlar bunlara hiç kulak vermiyolar ağızlarındaki kelime şu "zevkler ve renkler tartışılmaz" ☺ ve hiç kulak arkası etmiyorlar ve bunlar daha da çoğalıyor ufacık çocuklar fönlere alışıyorlar ☺Aileleri ise gençtir yapsınlar diyo tabi bazıları dayak yemeyi göze ala ala yapıyorlar ve işleri bittikten sonra yani akşam ya camilere gidip buz gibi suda yıkayıp veya kuaför salonlarına gelip yıkatırlar. Tabii ki mahallede işyerinde bu ne lan soytarımısın gibi laflar duyuyorlar onlar ise ne var ki bunda diyorlar ☺ bi şekilde idare ediyorlar ve şu an 10 gençten 6 sı bu şekil diyebilirim. 10 gençten 6 sı böyle derken *apaçi* tarzına takılıyor demek istedim. Bir mücadele var aileleriyle, var ama gençler kazanıyo demek istemezdim ama maalesef ☺ mücadeleyi gençler kazanıyor"

wished. But this is not the case anymore, everybody is free. Men with long hair or stubbly beard can go around and no one cares.[29]

Although Yasin says that "one should not judge a person by his looks", he seems confused about how to incorporate his lifestyle into his *delikanlı* identity. The following quote from him illustrates this confusion:

Well, I don't wear earrings, because my relatives and friends would not like it. I mean, it's not something suitable for a man. For example, at school[30], we warn men who wear earrings when we spot them. OK, we should not judge people by their looks, but I think girls and boys should not have things in common. *Puşi*[31] is another example; you cannot wear *puşi* in our circle of friends.[32]

The above quote suggests that young people like Yasin engage in everyday negotiations over the boundaries of *delikanlı* identity. In other words, as they are lured by the coolest trends into the consumerism game, they have to constantly reproduce "the other" in order to define themselves. In the process, they transform the definitions of

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[29] "Ben emlakçıda çalıştım abi, patronum bayandı, bana diyodu şu saçlarını indir ya da kestir filan. Ama insanı kılığıyla kıyafetiyle değerlendirmemek lazım, insanın içinde bitiyo herşey. Ben ona boyun eğmedim, sen işini iyi yapınca bu tip şeyler alışır. Eskiden öyleymiş, anlatır yani hep büyüklerimiz, öyle rahat gezemezlermiş. Ama şimdi öyle bi şey yok abi. Uzun saçlı olsun, kirli sakallı olsun filan. Herkes istediği gibi dolaşıyor, istediği yere girip çıkıyor."

[30] Yasin attends a two-year vocational high school at Gazi University, where ultranationalist (*ülkücü*) student groups are active. Among their activities are "warning" leftist and Kurdish students, especially those who are regarded as carrying the symbols of these identities. They have traditionally been not happy also with what they see as signs that are unfitting to a Turkish *delikanlı* such as long hair and earrings. It is surprising that Yasin can identify himself with the *ülkücü* stance and is a member of the group despite his gel-applied hairstyle and colorful perky clothes. This should be regarded as another indicator of the transformation of the *delikanlı* identity.

[31] *Puşi*, or *poşu*, is the traditional Kurdish scarf, similar to the Palestinian *keffiyeh*.

[32] "Ben küpe takmam. Neden? İşte akrabalar olsun, eş dost olsun, biz mesela Gazi'de küpeli filan gördüğümüzde uyarıyoruz insanları. Tamam insanları görünüşüne göre değerlendirmemek lazım, ama bence kızlarla erkeklerin ortak noktası olmaması lazım. Mesela puşi de bunun gibi, o da bizim ortamımızda olmaz."

young masculinity and thus unsettle the symbolic order of the society. They incorporate elements of style hitherto seen as un-*delikanlı* such as dancing, dying hair and wearing jewelry into the *delikanlı* identity.[33]

As the definition of what makes a young man *delikanlı* undergoes a transformation, then the sources of and the relations between capitals, in the Bourdieusian sense, also change. As the body becomes the main instrument through which young men construct their masculine identities (Mora, 2012), young men compete with each other through their bodies in order to prove their masculinity and to meet the gendered social expectations. I observed in my fieldwork that competition is waged through one's control over his body (and his life), rather than brute muscle strength. In other words, in order to be regarded as *more delikanlı*; a young man should learn how to use his body for aesthetic and functional purposes, and to push the limits of his body. This involves not only young people's efforts to modify and present their bodies in consumable styles (embodied cultural capital) (I discuss this in detail in the Section 4.4.), but also their eagerness to narrate their self-reliance, courageous behaviors and their experiences with sex and drugs in order to earn prestige and respect as a "true *delikanlı*" (symbolic capital).

Perhaps as a legacy of the arabesk culture of the 1980s and the 1990s pioneered by Ibrahim Tatlises, who once famously said "Was there an Oxford in Urfa and we didn't study there?", young people I interviewed tend to value their life experiences and look down upon those who continue their education accusing them of being inexperienced in life. In a society in which people frequently encounter the question "Where did you graduate from?", the common expression "I have graduated from the school of life" (*"Hayat okulundan mezun oldum ben"*) seems to continue to function for under-schooled people as a way of constructing and presenting a positive sense of self.

For Müslüm, as conveyed earlier, dropping out of school at the age of ten has prepared him for life and endowed him with many skills that give him an edge over other people. After I asked him about his education, he responded me with the following words, which evoke what Paul Willis (1977) terms as "counter school culture", prevalent among the British working class, in which practical knowledge and life

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[33] Yonucu (2005:125), similarly, observed among young men of Zeytinburnu that dancing became a part of the *delikanlı* identity due to the increased use of ecstacy, which had brought about its own culture.

experience are privileged over scholarly knowledge and thus their class position is reproduced:

> I studied at the school of life [*laughs*]. I went to school until the third grade. The reason I dropped out is because I wanted to go into the working life. Do I regret it? No. Would it have been better if I had continued my education? I don't think so, because I learned a profession. I can always earn a living from this profession [*fishing*], because I know it. For example, in fishing, holding the knife properly is the most important thing. Not everybody can do it, but I can. If I give you the knife and ask you to cut the fish to pieces, you cannot do it, no way. I see many graduates, most of them are unemployed. For example, there is a university graduate who does the dishes in the restaurant across the street. I swear it is true. I have worked in many jobs in these nine years. Maybe I cannot recall them all: I worked in grapery, I worked in restaurants, I went out fishing, I worked as a guard, I worked as the manager of a branch of Leke Jeans. Seriously, I worked in many jobs despite my age. If you are willing to work, you can earn money anywhere. The most important thing is your capability to learn to do something. Let's say someone broke this table, I go and fix it, too.[34]

Throughout our conversations, most of my interlocutors told me that they have been through a lot of things and had vast experiences in life, compared to their peers. Being an experienced man, in what Müslüm calls "the youth life" (*"genç hayatı"*), is presented as the primary symbolic capital by the people I interviewed. The realm of the youth life, in their accounts, is what is outside the sheltered spaces of home and school.

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[34] "Hayat okulunda okudum abi ben ☺ Ben üçüncü sınıfa kadar okudum, ilkokul üç. Bırakmamın sebebi iş hayatına başlamak. Lokantacılık yaptım. Pişman mıyım, değilim. Okusam iyi olur muydu, olmazdı. Çünkü ben meslek öğrendim, ben bu meslekte her zaman ekmek yerim. Yani yolda yürüsem beni çevirirler yani, çevre önemli, neden bu işi biliyorum ben. Şu bıçağı tutmak en önemli şey balıkçılıkta. Bunu herkes yapamaz, ama ben yaparım, çünkü öğrendim. Sana versem şu balığı kes diye, sen kesemezsin, öyle bi şansın yok. Bak dokuz senedir iş hayatındayım ben, iş öğrendim. Şu an okuyanların çoğunu görüyorum, çoğu işsiz. Mesela karşıda bi üniversite mezunu var, inşaat üniversitesi, bulaşık yıkıyo. Yemin ediyorum bak. Bak ben çoğu mesleği yaptım bu yaşta. Sana saysam saysam bitiremem yani, belki de gelmeyenler olur aklıma. Bağcılık yaptım, lokantacılık yaptım, denize çıktım balıkçılık yaptım, kapkacılık yaptım yani midyecilik, nöbet tuttum, ondan sonra Leke Jeans'de müdür oldum, dönercilik yaptım, döner kestim, ben her türlü meslek yaptım bu yaşta ciddi söylüyorum. Yani hayatta yapabileceğim her türlü işi yaptım ben. Bi yere girsem her yerde ekmek yerim. Çalışırsan yani her yerde ekmek yersin sen. Önemli olan bir işi kavramak. Mesela şurda biri gitti şu masayı kırdı, ben giderim onu da tamir ederim. "

Their involvements in fights, encounters with the police, spending the night out on the streets, and their knowledge of and experiences in alcohol and drug use and in the nightlife; all are presented as markers of their proper masculinities. They were very eager to tell stories to show that they have been through a lot of things although they are young. This feeling is crystallized in the following words of Müslüm:

> As I have experienced a lot of things, I am not that enthusiastic anymore. For example, if a girl approaches me now with her girlish and flighty attitudes and wants to meet, I wouldn't get excited. I mean, it feels meaningless; I don't want to waste my energy. I want my girlfriend to have the capacity to understand me. My girlfriend is 28 years old. When we are together, our actions and interests are in harmony. I don't want my girlfriend to be childish, because I am an experienced man, so is she. You know what they say about people like me: "grown-up fast".[35]

The same feeling of "having an old head on young shoulders" is also expressed by Erkan in a brief conversation:

> I am 20 years old now, and I am already fed up with club environments and the nightlife at this age. I feel like there is nothing left that I can taste. I have been to the most luxurious clubs that you can think of. Let me show you my photos *[He opens his Facebook profile and starts showing me photos taken in different clubs and with different people]*. I have photos with many famous people. Look, for example, this is Sevda Demirel[36].[37]

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[35] "Ben çok şey yaşadığım için hayatta, şu an bana çok boş geliyo herşey. Şimdi bana bi kız gelip tanışmak istese filan, ya da genç kız tripleri yapsa, çok boş geliyo, uğraşmak istemiyorum. Hiç işim olmaz diyorum, çekemiyorum yani. Beni anlayabilecek kapasitede olmasını istiyorum yani kız arkadaşımın filan. Benim kız arkadaşım 28 yaşında mesela. Bir yere gittiğimiz zaman oturup kalkmasını biliyoruz, konuştuğumuzu biliyoruz, muhabbetimizi sohbetimizi biliyoruz yani. Olgun olsun istiyorum ben, öyle çocukça olsun istemiyorum. Çünkü ben yaşamışım o da yaşamış bu hayatı, hatta benden daha çok yaşamış. Ben öyle çocukça hareketleri, genç kız triplerini çekemiyorum. Derler ya çabuk büyümüş. O şekil bi şey oldum ben de."

[36] A once-famous singer.

[37] "Ben abi 20 yaşındayım. Sana şöyle diyim, bu yaşta kulüp ortamından, gece hayatından sıkıldım. 15 yaşında bu ortamlara takılmaya başladım desem 5 senede

In the same conversation, Alp continued with his own experiences:

When I was 19, I went to Reina[38] by a yacht. My older brother had been put in prison and left a good amount of money to me. I did not visit him even for once, because he was sentenced to 96 years. Anyway, I started spending that money. That night, for example, I went to Reina and spent 50 thousand Liras there.[39]

During my interviews, I have heard similar stories for many times. I observed that such experiences and knowledge of "the life" circulate among young people as an important source of prestige and thus form a significant part of their senses of self.

4.2. Emergence of Apaçi Style and Culture: Young People's Struggle for Visibility

I argue that the *apaçi* style and culture have gained widespread popularity among lower class male youth due to the above-discussed social perception of the category of *delikanlı* as a temporary period of permissiveness, the role of the body in constructing *delikanlı* identities, and the changes in the qualities attributed to this category.

Being different from others ("*farklı olmak*") and attracting attention ("*dikkat çekmek*") are among the themes that recurred most frequently in the interviews. Although the ways young people self-identify differ, these two interrelated pursuits seem to mark the contemporary youth culture in Turkey, and the body is the main site

sıkıldım artık, hiç canım çekmiyo. Bak mesela sana fotoğrafları gösteriyim, Reina'sı olsun orası olsun burası olsun. Kimlerle çekilmiş fotoğraflarım var. Bak mesela bu Sevda Demirel."

[38] One of Istanbul's famous partying venues by the Bosphorus.

[39] "19 yaşında Reina'nın kapısına yatla gittim ben. Abim cezaevine girdi, çok güzel para bıraktı geriye, yat bıraktı arabalar bıraktı. Görüşmeye hiç gitmedim, 96 sene aldı çünkü. Ben bi takılmaya başladım sonra o paralarla, Reina'ya bi gittim, o gece 50 milyar para harcadım."

for standing out from the crowds. As seen in the puzzlement of the middle classes and their initial inability to make sense of it, today's lower class youth express themselves in strikingly peculiar ways. Consumption has in the late capitalism emerged as "a privileged site for the fabrication of self and society, of culture and identity" (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2000:299); however, consumers construct their selves not merely through the things they possess but increasingly through the ways they exhibit what they possess. In the "society of the spectacle" (Debord, 1967/2002), *appearing* triumphs over *having*.

The celebrity culture, as Baroncelli and Freitas (2011:1) suggests, has become the means through which "the incorporation of the self into the codes of performance and visibility has been played out within contemporary popular culture". The following rather long quote from Hedges (2009:27) illustrates the instrumentality of the celebrity culture:

> The flamboyant lives of celebrities and the outrageous characters on television, movies, professional wrestling, and sensational talk shows are peddled to us, promising to fill up the emptiness in our own lives. Celebrity culture encourages everyone to think of themselves as potential celebrities, as possessing unique if unacknowledged gifts. It is, as Christopher Lasch diagnosed, a culture of narcissism. Faith in ourselves, in a world of make-believe, is more important than reality. [...] Popular expressions of religious belief, personal empowerment, corporatism, political participation, and self-definition argue that all of us are special, entitled, and unique. All of us, by tapping into our inner reserves of personal will and undiscovered talent, by visualizing what we want, can achieve, and deserve to achieve, happiness, fame, and success. This relentless message cuts across ideological lines. This mantra has seeped into every aspect of our lives. We are all entitled to everything.

While one effect of the celebrity culture is the promotion of the belief that everyone can achieve fame and success if she successfully polishes her talents and presents herself in a desirable and consumable manner, the other is the creation of a tendency in people towards organizing and leading their lives like celebrities. That is, people live like celebrities even though they do not attempt to become one.

Within this atmosphere, young people are aware of the fact that what matters is how they are perceived by others, and they constantly search for new means of self-

representation accordingly. According to Apaçi Müslüm, for example, what make *apaçis* different from other youth are "their fascination with having fun, choice of deliberately ragged clothes, peculiar hairstyles, dance style, and their pursuit for always being different"[40]. He explains what makes him an *apaçi* as follows:

> Young people mostly prefer light-colored clothes; clothes that stand out. I have many strange clothes; for example, I have this blue set; shoes, trousers, t-shirt, eyeglasses; everything is blue. I bought every piece from a different place and brought them together. I mean, you create your own style; you decide what would suit you best. When I put them on, everything is blue and shining, it becomes very eye-catching; people cannot help but look at me.[41]

I asked him why he wants to attract attention, and he gave the following response:

> Because then you look *apaçi*. I don't know; it's youth. For example, I spend a lot of time even while choosing small things like a wristwatch; I want it to be something nice, because I want to draw attention when I enter a place, no matter whether people there know me or not. For example, I have this pair of trousers with 250 holes on it. I prepared it myself; it took me three hours to finish it. It is very attention-grabbing when I put it on and go around.[42]

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[40] "*Apaçi*nin diğer gençlerden farkı, böyle tiki takılması, yırtık pırtık takılması, eğlenceye düşkün olması, dans etmesi, dikkat çekici olmaya çalışması, saçlarını yapması."

[41] "Giyim mesela, hep genellikle böyle beyaz mavi açık tonları seviyor gençler. Ben mağazacılık da yaptım 2 sene Leke Jeans'te çalıştım. Dikkat çekici şeyleri. Bende mesela çok şey var. Mesela bende mavi bir set var kendim düzenledim. Masmavi mesela. Ayakkabım mavi, pantolonum mavi, montum mavi, gömlek, tişört, gözlük herşey mavi. Öyle bir düzen de var. Bunu kendin düzenliyorsun, kendi stilini kendin yaratıyorsun. Bunu giysem bana yakışır diyorsun. Birini ortaköyden aldım örneğin diğerini taksimden, ama kendine nasıl yakıştıracağına sen karar veriyorsun. Bunları bi fit haline getirmek istiyorsun. Mesela bunları giydiğim zaman, bu üstündeki mavi, altındaki mavi parlıyor, çok dikkat çekici olur."

[42] "Neden çünkü *apaçi* görünüyorsun. Gençler işte. Mesela kemerimi kolumdaki saatimi bile seçmek için çok zaman harcıyorum. Güzel bir renk olsun tarz olsun diye. Çünkü girdiğin mekanda dikkat çekmek istiyorsun. Seni tanıyorlarsa da tanımıyorlarsa da o

It is interesting that Müslüm does not elaborate on the motivation behind his (and other young people's) constant efforts to be different from other people. As in my fieldwork I primarily followed the concept of *apaçi*, I asked him (and others as well) a couple of times why being different and attracting attention are so important for him, but I cannot say that I was at first satisfied with the responses I got, because I think I expected to find more "concrete" motives/benefits. However, as Müslüm's response *"because then you look apaçi"* shows, trying to be different from others and to attract their attention seem to be taken for granted for him, as if everyone essentially has these tendencies. Of course, it has some side benefits such as being more attractive to girls, but the aspiration to become or look different from others is primarily about his own sense of self. When I inquired about this aspiration during my fieldwork, I frequently encountered different variations of the same response "Because everybody wants to stand out in life". For example, I asked Yasin why he prefers spectacular hairstyles (Picture 5), he gave the following response:

> In general, people try to distinguish themselves, be it with their hairstyles, beard styles or clothes. They try to show something; in a sense they say 'this is me' through these choices. For example, girls like such hairstyles. I never go out without doing my hair. I can wear a hat, but I never step out of the house with my hair undone. My friends would wait for me at the door for like half an hour. I have been like this for the last two or three years. It's been a habit for me. Before that, I was poorly groomed. Now that I am in the music business, I must look after myself; I must be different from other people.[43]

mekanda. Bu civarlarda genellikle yırtık pantolon filan moda. Bende 250 tane delikli pantolon var. Kendim yaptım, pantolonu mesela giyiyosun çok dikkat çekici oluyor. Ufak delikler yani püsküllü oluyor. Onu yapmak üç saat zamanımı aldı. Büyük delikli pantolonlar var mesela. 32 tane delik var bi pantolonda. Bi tarafta 16 bi tarafta 16."

[43] "İnsan genel olarak baktığımızda kendini ortaya çıkarmaya çalışıyor, saçıyla olur sakalıyla olur kıyafetiyle olur, bir şeyleri gösterme çabasında, hani "ben buyum" diyor yani. Kızlara mesela, kızlar böyle daha çok beğeniyorlar. Ben kesinlikle adımım atmam dışarı saçıma bakım yapmadan, asla, şapka takar öyle çıkarım en fazla, o kadar özen gösteririm. Arkadaşlarım gelse mesela kapıda beklerler. Çıkmam ben yarım saat öyle üstüme başıma bakmadan. Bi alışkanlık olmuş 2-3 yıldan beri böyle. Ondan önce paspaldık ☺ Şimdi müzik hayatına atılınca insan ister istemez kendine bakım göstermek zorunda, öyle diğer insanlardan farklı olmak zorunda."

Picture 5. Yasin asks his fans on Facebook which hairstyle they like most.

I asked him, too, about the motivation lying beneath his efforts to attract the attention of others, and he gave the following response:

Let's say, when I enter a club; I wish everyone to look at me and say, "Look, he is here". Then, when I dance, for example, people gather around me, watch the way I dance, some of them come and talk to me, they say like "I want to learn how to dance like this". I taught many people how to dance. I mean, they want to be like you. One way or another, you have this desire. You want to attract others' attention.[44]

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[44] "Mesela bi kulübe gittik, oraya gittiğim zaman herkes bana baksın, "şu geldi bu geldi" desinler yani bu hava oluşuyor insanda içeri girer girmez zaten. Ondan sonra sen dans ederken filan toplanıyor insanlar başına, sana bakıyor, birileri geliyo senle konuşuyor, ben de öğrenecem diyor mesela, o da senin gibi olmak istiyor, çok kişiye

These accounts show that their primary concern is being seen, or not going unnoticed, by others. They enjoy being aware of the fact that other people notice and acknowledge their presence. Müslüm, again, told[45] me that he sometimes dresses up in a spectacular manner and goes to the school of his niece to pick her up, and that he immediately attracts the attention of other students there. In his own words, "everybody says 'here comes the *apaçi*'". This is quite similar to what Yasin says above. They both see their appearance in a place as something extraordinary for the people present. It is of course not my intention here to question whether they actually create such an influence, that is, whether other people whisper to each other, "look, he is here". However, what is apparent here is that they want to create such an impact, and they enjoy it. They want to be, or think that they are, the center of attention in a place thanks mainly to the way they look. They both give examples of crowded and chaotic places -the club and the school exit-, and they enjoy *being in the spotlight* in these places. They want to stand out and be recognized immediately even in crowded places, and to cause excitement merely through their appearance there, like celebrities do. In short, not only do they want to be seen by other people, but also they want to stir an immediate reaction among others, which is reminiscent of that of celebrities.

They also enjoy being approached by people that they do not know. Like a celebrity who is asked for an autograph, they tell stories about how their appearance or dance is acknowledged and praised by others. Müslüm told a story, similar to that of Yasin above, of people who praised his dance and asked him to teach them how to dance like that:

> I have been to a wedding ceremony in my village. I knew the man who played the music and asked him to play the *apaçi* song. Then, we danced. The next day, I returned to Istanbul and saw that many people

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öğrettim dans etmeyi. Yani böyle bi hava oluşuyor insanda. İster istemez dikkat çekmek istiyosun."

[45] "Ben mesela yeğenimi almaya gidiyorum okula, dikkat çekici giyiniyorum, orda hemen dikkat çekiyorum, herkes diyor işte geldi *apaçi*, tipten zaten direkt belli oluyor, bazıları gelip konuşmak istiyorlar kızlar, görüşmek istiyorlar."

sent Facebook messages to my niece praising my dance and asking when I would go there again. People want to meet; or they ask me to teach them how to dance like that.[46]

As these accounts suggest, they enjoy being aware that they are seen by others and receiving positive reactions. However, sometimes they do not go after praises; they just want to assert their presence. The following quote from Müslüm illustrates this desire for "being seen for the sake of being seen":

I am such a man who wandered around Istanbul with '*apaçi*' written on my head. It was written on one side; there was the shape of a heart on the other side. Taksim, Ortaköy, Bebek, Osmanbey... I mean I went around everywhere throughout Istanbul. Sometimes people give big reactions. People ask about how and where I had it done. Some say 'Are you crazy?', some others ask if my parents are happy with it. Well, such instances make you feel happy inside. Without self-confidence, you can never dare to do such things. People notice you. For example, if you were to see me on the street with my ripped jeans with thirty holes, you would not help but look at me.[47]

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[46] "Mesela düğün oluyor dans ediyoruz takılıyoruz. Çalan abimiz de tanıdık, aç dedim ordan *apaçi* müziğini, dans ettik. Yarın oluyo, buraya geliyorum, yani İstanbul'a. Yeğenime herkes face'ten mesaj atıyo, abin ne güzel dans ediyor, o bu filan böyle, herkes yazıyor, "ne güzel dans ediyorsun", "ne zaman gelecek bir daha" filan. Yani böyle insanlar tanışmak istiyor, bana da öğret diyorlar. 16-17 yaşında kızlar oluyor mesela, senle görüşmek istiyor."

[47] "Ben kafama '*apaçi*' yazdırıp Türkiye'yi gezmiş adamım. İstanbul çapında gezmediğim yer kalmadı. Bu tarafta mesela, yan taraftan baktığın zaman okunuyor. Diğer tarafta da kalp var. Taksim olsun, Ortaköy, Bebek, Sarıyer işte Osmanbey, yani tüm yerlere gidiyordum ben İstanbul çapında. Gezme amaçlı. Mesela sen gezme amaçlı buraya geliyorsun, ben de gezme amaçlı oraya gidiyorum. Çok büyük tepki verenler oluyor mesela, 'aaa nasıl yaptırdın', 'nerde yaptırdın' diyenler oluyor. 'Neye güvenip de buna kalkışıyorsun' diyenler oluyor mesela, 'ailen karşılık vermiyor mu' diyenler oluyor. Var öyle çok şeyler diyenler var. Yolda yürüyorsun, 'aaa n'apmış' diyorlar *apaçi* yazdırmış kafasına. İçten içe mutlu oluyosun tabii. Kendine güvenmesen zaten böyle bi şeye kalkışamazsın. İnsanlar seni farkediyor, zaten giyiminden, saç stilinden her türlü her yerde farkedilirsin. Ben giymişim otuz tane delikli kot mesela, sen beni yolda görsen gözüne çarpmaz mı, imkanı yok çarpar."

The above quote shows that being noticed by others is in itself a value for Müslüm. He just enjoys being seen by others without paying much attention to their impressions. In this case; he simply wants recognition, not appreciation or desire.

Yet another aspect of young people's quest for visibility is their interest in getting involved in situations in which, like celebrities, they are the ones who are surrounded by others. That is, they enjoy not only being surrounded and/or approached by some people in places like a club or a wedding ceremony, but also being seen by others as a person who is the center of attention. The following quote from Berkay illustrates this point:

> Let me tell you this: I was in a wedding ceremony dancing with relatives and friends. Because I am a good dancer, they wanted me to dance alone at the center of the circle. I was dancing, and you know what, suddenly like fifty people surrounded me. Then, I got motivated and carried away. I started to dance better showing different moves and figures. After the dance, they came and congratulated me.[48]

In the above story, what makes his dance remarkable is not only that it attracted the attention of around fifty people, but also that it elevated him into the position of someone who is admired and surrounded by fifty people. This is similar to what Krista A. Thompson (2011:29) referred to as "being seen in the process of being seen or represented". Based on her observations on the spectacle-like high school prom entrances in the Bahamas, she argues that young prom-goers are interested, while staging pageant-like theatrical entrances, in creating a spectacle of being represented. I quote the following rather long paragraph in order to clarify my point here:

> The young woman who staged her appearance on the red carpet, flanked by photographers and crazed fans, did so primarily to create a spectacle

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[48] "Mesela şöyle bir şey anlatıyım sana. Bir keresinde düğündeyiz. İşte akrabalar arkadaşlar filan, oyun oynuyoruz, dans ediyoruz. Ben iyi dans ettiğim için beni aldılar ortaya. Bi anda ne oldu abi biliyor musun, birden elli kişi etrafımı sardı. Haa ne oluyo o zaman gaza geliyorsun, daha güzel oynamaya başlıyorsun, daha değişik hareketler yapmaya çalışıyorsun. Sonra geliyolar ne güzel dans ediyosun, biz niye yapamıyoruz filan diyolar."

of being photographed. She aimed to be seen being the subject of the photographers' flashing lights, the enviable focus of their snapping shutters, the prestigious occupant of a space where images are made and stars are illuminated. Remarkably, given that she enlisted professional photographers and photojournalists on the island to line her carpet, material documents of the event –the actual photos- were beside the point. When asked for photographs of the red carpet entrance she replied that she had none and was ambivalent about whether any photographs had been taken.

Like the case conveyed above, young people's enjoyment of visibility has a third layer, in which the stake is being seen while being seen and admired by others.

To sum up what I have discussed in this section so far; young people's quest for visibility operates in three layers: In the first one, the aim is what I referred to above as "being seen for the sake of being seen", which is mainly concerned with recognition. In the second one, the motive is not only to attract the attention of others, but also to receive appreciation and praise from them. In the third one, finally, they are concerned with and derive enjoyment from thinking about how they are seen while they are seen and admired by others.

While forging spectacular styles, it is apparent that young people are constructing their own selves through both experiencing and imagining that they are recognized, appreciated and desired by others. However, sometimes, others' gazes are not sought. It is interesting that I observed in my visit to a daytime dance club in Bakırköy that the walls were covered by mirrors. Similarly, Mehmet, an 18-year-old high school students who does not self-identify as *apaçi* and who does not like such spectacular styles, told[49] me that he has once been to a daytime disco accompanying a friend of his and described the atmosphere inside as a weird one where everyone danced looking at themselves at the mirrors that covered the walls of the place. This shows that performance and visibility are sometimes aimed only at one's own gaze. In other words, watching one's own body dancing in spectacular clothes is a source of enjoyment and a positive

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[49] "Bir arkadaşımla bir kere gittim ben diskoya. O da tam *apaçi* değil ama öyle takılıyor biraz. Zaten Yetenek Sizsiniz'e filan çıktı. Herkes aynada kendine bakarak dans ediyordu işte, ben etmedim ama. Öyle abuk subuk danslar, hareketler."

contribution to one's sense of self. It could therefore be argued that the real presence of others is sometimes not required at all for young people's experiencing of visibility.

4.3. The Role of the Internet in the Emergence and Evolution of New Forms of Self-Expression among Urban Lower Class Youth

Deniz Yonucu (2005), in her MA thesis based on a fieldwork conducted in 2003 and 2004 in the working-class district of Zeytinburnu in Istanbul, writes that the youth of the district became drug addicts and dealers, and these new practices contributed to the transformations in their identities and styles. She observed that the introduction of ecstasy along with videos showing clubs in the Netherlands brought about major changes in the cultural practices of Zeytinburnu's youth such as clubbing, dancing, dying hair, and so forth. She argues that young men of the district started to experience being modern and being like middle classes by "breaking loose" with ecstasy and thus "forgetting" their social condition.[50]

It was VCDs and/or videocassettes that the youth of Zeytinburnu watched how their peers in the Netherlands clubbed, and I observed a very similar practice during my fieldwork, but this time YouTube was the medium.

Alp, after I met him in the dress shop where he worked, invited me to join his group of friends that night to talk. I accepted the invitation and joined them while they were chatting in the backside of a then-closed second hand store of one of his friends present. They were four of them talking about this and that, drinking beer, smoking pot, listening to music and watching videos on YouTube. He told me that they do this most nights of the week after closing their shops. I tried not to spoil their party and mostly observed and listened to their conversation, as the owner of the place seemed uncomfortable with my presence there. Mostly, they talked about clubbing and drugs. The computer was literally and figuratively at the center of the event, as they played

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[50] I discuss the implications of drug use for new forms of self-expression among youth in the Conclusion.

different videos on YouTube and talked about them. For example, one of them showed a video of a festival in Belgium and then we started talking about it. According to them, the festival is built upon drugs and sex. One of them talked about how great it is to be in such an event, as he had gone to a similar one a couple of years ago. I learned that there are tourism agencies that organize tours to such festivals for, according to them, affordable prices. One of them told that he had been saving money to go to a festival in Belgium in three months with a tour, which will cost him around 800 dollars and consist of participation in the festival for a couple of days and stay in Amsterdam for five days after the festival. Among the videos we watched was one that depicts how one gets high after taking a drug, the name of which I did not understand, and hallucinates. As also conveyed earlier in this thesis, Alp told me that today's youth access such videos at very early ages and they want to enjoy similar experiences. They were in consensus that the internet has changed the practices of youth significantly and widened their horizons.

In another interview, I asked Mehmet how the contemporary spectacular styles and practices of youth had emerged, and he gave the following response drawing on his own observations and experiences:

> I don't know maybe this did not have an influence, but an internet café was opened in our neighborhood, they [*youth with apaçi style*] started to appear after that. Maybe it's a coincidence. Msn messenger was popular at that time, there wasn't Facebook, you would find msn addresses on Google, add them as friends, then talk to those people. We would play games then, but these *apaçi*-like guys would camera-chat with their sunglasses inside the internet café [*he laughs*]. They would listen to dance music and watch videos on the internet, and then try to learn dancing by practicing at home. I think they must have invented some of the moves of that dance [*apaçi dance*]. The origin of it is called techno dance or something like that, but of course, these guys must have added their own moves to it.[51]

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[51] "Bilmiyorum belki etkisi olmamıştır da, bizim mahalleye internet kafe açılmıştı, ondan sonra ortaya çıkmıştı bunlar. Belki de tesadüftür. İşte msn meşhurdu o zamanlar, facebook filan yoktu, google'a yazıp msn adresleri buluyordun, onları ekleyip konuşuyordun, biz işte oyun filan oynardık o zamanlar, ama bu "*apaçi*" gibi olanlar internette kafede gözlükle filan oturup kamerada chat yapıyorlardı ☺ İşte internette dans müziği filan izliyorlardı, sonra öğrenip evde onu yapmaya filan çalışıyorlardı. Gerçi o figürlerin yarısını filan kendileri bulmuşlardır. Tekno dansı mı deniyo öyle bi şey, temeli o yani bu dansın, tabii kendilerinden bi şey de katmışlardır ona."

Similarly, Müslüm[52] and Berkay follow dance and music videos on the internet to learn how other people are dancing and to incorporate their moves to the *apaçi* dance; and Yasin thinks that the internet has changed many things, as it makes it possible for him to see everything there and appropriate them such as music and hairstyle.[53] It is apparent that the increased availability of the internet offers opportunities for these young people to become parts of the transnational youth and to forge their practices and styles by negotiating between local and foreign elements.

The increased penetration of the Web in people's lives and especially the widespread popularity of social networking websites also enable them to live like celebrities and construct different subjectivities. Websites such as Facebook and Twitter are highly individualized and they urge people to construct and present coherent individual profiles and to make identity statements; not to mention the applications that enable users to modify their photographs and share them with others, to make others know what they are doing and where they are, and to respond to questions coming from anonymous people. In short, individuals are now able to share images of themselves or their artistic productions with countless interconnected people. Thanks to its above-mentioned qualities, the internet seems to offer people a venue in which they enjoy being *followed* and *liked* like celebrities.

Yasin, for example, was working on his first album and planning to release it online for free. He reaches new listeners by sharing his music videos on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter; and sending them to groups dedicated to *arabesk rap* (see

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[52] "I don't listen to foreign music that much, but I sometimes watch videos on the internet to learn how they dance. It does not have to be foreigners, you can find dances of Turkish people, too. For example, you can learn the figures and moves of salsa and mix it with your *apaçi* dance."
("Öyle çok yabancı müzik dinlemem ama bazan izlerim internette filan öğrenmek için, öyle apaçi dansı gibi hani ya da başka danslar, nasıl dans ediyorlar filan diye. Yabancı değil genel olarak Türkler de zaten yapıyorlar. Bu şekilde takip ediyorum, atıyorum salsa dansı, bunun figürlerini öğrenip apaçiyle karıştırabilirsin. O şekil de olabilir yani.")

[53] "İnternet mesela, internet çok şeyi değiştirdi abi şimdiye kadar. Orda herşeyi görüyosun, sen de denemek istiyosun. Müzik olsun, saç stili mesela; görüyosun kendi üzerinde denemek istiyosun."

Section 4.4.1). He thinks that the reason of his popularity is not his music. He argues that people, especially girls, would still like him if he did not make music, proudly noting that he has around 73 thousand fans on Facebook.[54] In social media, he occasionally asks his fans to send him questions and answer them in videos like a celebrity and share these videos on the internet.[55]

Yasin told me that in 2010 he tried his luck in the Turkish Got Talent Show, *Yetenek Sizsiniz Türkiye,* but he was eliminated in the second round; because, according to him, it is not a music show and this is why they search for interesting visual things, not musical talents.[56] I heard many times during my fieldwork stories about *Yetenek Sizsiniz Türkiye.* Most of my interlocutors told me stories about their or their friends' participation in the show. It is very popular among lower class youth in Turkey, and seen as one of the most effective venues through which they can build fame.[57] Müslüm also told me that he and two of his friends are in the process of choreographing a dance, with which they plan to take part in the talent show.

Mehmet, similarly, told[58] me that after a friend of his had participated in *Yetenek Sizsiniz Turkiye*, he became very popular on Facebook and *feyk*[59] accounts were opened

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[54] "Yani abi benim popüler olmamın nedeni müzik değil, müzik yapmasam, kızlar filan yine beğenir. Benim 73bin küsur hayranım var facebookta."

[55] *McKarizma Sorularınızı Yanıtlıyor* (McKarizma Responds to Your Questions) YouTube Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VlV2X9yTwNg (Retrieved Jan 11, 2013)

[56] "2010'da ben Yetenek Sizsiniz'e çıktım. İkinci turda elendim. Şimdi onlar müzik programı değil, daha böyle ilgi çekici, gözle görülebilecek şeyler arıyolar. İlginç yani, biri çıkıyo mesela, şuna bak diyosun."

[57] In fact, it might be seen as one of the factors behind the increased popularity of daring spectacular styles among youth. A friend of mine who is working in the show business told me that what sells today is what makes an ordinary viewer think that (s)he is valuable. In this show, according to him, a 15-year-old kid who displays an undistinguished performance receives a standing ovation from the "real stars" who make up the jury, and this gives the message to all ordinary teenagers watching the show that they can also do it and be publicly applauded.

[58] "Yetenek Sizsiniz Türkiye'yi izliyordum, orda da böyle rap filan yapanlar çok çıkıyordu. İşte benim arkadaş çıktı diyorum ya, niye çıktı ben de bilmiyorum, öyle söylüyordu biz de dalga geçiyorduk. Sonra çıkmış filan, böyle *apaçi* dansı filan yapmış, ondan filan yaptı, geçemedi her neyse. Ondan sonra işte Facebook'tan –feyk mi deniyordu- feyk hesabını filan açmışlar. Yani öyle ünlü gibi bi şey olmuştu, öyle ünlülerin feyk hesabını açıyorlar ya, onun da açıyorlardı. İşte bi video paylaşıyordu

on his name. This, according to him, shows the importance of being seen on TV among youth. Having high number of followers/subscribers and getting high Facebook likes are a significant point of competition and a source of prestige and status among lower class young people. One becomes a *feym*[60] (Picture 6) if (s)he gets high number of likes on Facebook and if *feyk* accounts or pages are opened on his/her name.

Picture 6. "Mom, I became a *feym*", written on a metal plate on a pedestrian overpass in Kadıköy, Istanbul.

In short, the opportunities offered by the information and communication technologies enable young people to situate themselves as part of the transnational youth, to construct different subjectivities by engaging in cultural exchange, and to find

mesela, kızlar filan elli tane yorum atıyorlardı. Yani demek istediğim ona bi faydası olmuş yani."

[59] Turkish spelling of the English word "fake".
[60] Turkish spelling of the English word "fame".

a venue through which they can build and enjoy fame. As Baroncelli and Freitas (2011:2) suggests, "the set of tools [*made available by the Web 2.0*], from which people become able to craft, narrate and expose their selves to a broad audience, potentializes forms of making people's identities visible, often associated with strategies of spectacularization". The internet is thus quite functional for these lower class young people, whose visibility is undesired in certain actual spaces and cultural representations of the city and who at the same time are tempted to construct and exhibit unique and visible images of themselves.

4.4. New Forms of Musical and Visual Self-Expression among Urban Lower Class Youth

So far, I have attempted to contextualize the *apaçi* culture that manifests itself through different tastes and spectacular styles. As I have touched upon throughout the thesis so far the elements of this culture fragmentarily, I will discuss in this section the new forms of musical and visual self-expression among lower class youth in more detail.

4.4.1. The Change of Musical Taste

The change of musical taste is one of the most significant factors that make today's lower class youth different. It is also among the markers of the transition from the *maganda/kıro* narrative to the *apaçi* narrative. As indicated in the Section 2.2, Turkey's opening to world markets and integration into the global culture of consumerism started a new era in the 1980s, as "almost overnight, a dizzying array of globalised images, icons, sounds and commodities flooded the cultural spaces" of Istanbul, the country's gateway to world markets (Öncü, 2002:173). However, until recently, music genres such as heavy metal, hip hop and acid house had gained popularity among young people particularly from middle and upper classes. In other words, the inflow of these music genres, and their accompanied styles, remained largely

limited to a small number of consumers. For example, as Solomon (2003:880) notes, "while there had been some hip-hop related activity in Turkey before 1995, hip-hop and rap really took off in Turkey that year", as the German-Turkish rap project Cartel came to Turkey for a concert tour. Elsewhere, Solomon (2005:8) observed in the first-half of the 2000s that "the rappers and DJs in [*the Turkish hip-hop community*] are generally not poor people or members of socially marginalized minority groups such as Kurds, Roma, or Muslim refugees from the Balkan wars of the 1990s, but are largely middle-class ethnic Turks, university-educated, often with good jobs". Being/remaining *underground* was a source of value and authenticity in the hip-hop community (Solomon, 2005). However, through increased popularity of rappers such as Ceza and Sagopa Kajmer, involvement and marketing efforts of the popular music industry, and coverage of media; hip hop began to gain widespread popularity among urban youth.

While *arabesk* used to be the music genre that appealed to people living in *gecekondus*, "today's youth do not listen to arabesk anymore", stated Müslüm. He continued, "They listen to *arabesk rap* or dance music, because they involve motion. I do not listen to arabesk, why would I? I like rap, I like action".[61]

"Arabesk rap" is the contribution of Turkish youth, living both in Turkey and the Western Europe, to the global "Hip Hop Nation" through a blend of arabesk music and rap lyrics and style. A typical arabesk rap song is composed of a modified or looped sound of an arabesk song and rap-style lyrics. The content of the lyrics involves arabesk themes, such as separation, alienation and unrequited love; and/or gangsta rap themes such as drug use, alcohol abuse and death. The voice of the rapper is mostly gloomy, yet it often gets aggressive.[62]

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[61] "Bugünün gençleri arabesk dinlemiyor, arabesk rap dinliyor ya da dans müziği, çünkü bu müzik türünde hareket var. Ben arabesk dinlemiyorum, ne alakam olur. Rap olacak bana, hareket olacak. Mesela bu şarkının [*O an cafede çalan pop şarkısı*] remiksi olsa çok güzel olur, o zaman dinlerim."

[62] Facebook is again the most instrumental venue for arabesk rappers to contact with each other. Via groups and pages, they exchange their rap and engage in interactions with others. Some of the Facebook groups are the following: ***Türkçe Rap*** https://www.facebook.com/Rapp.videolar (Dec 13, 2012), ***Arabesk Rap*** https://www.facebook.com/HD.AreBesk.RaP (Dec 13, 2012), and a more "gangsta style" page ***Bağcılar Arabesk Rap*** https://www.facebook.com/BaqcLarKatliamRap (Dec 13, 2012). Some example arabesk rap songs are the following: DJ Afyok, MC Ukala ft Azemmix – Zoruma Gidiyor

Today, there are perhaps thousands of rappers in Turkey, most of whom are amateurs or semi-professionals. Mostly teenage boys from low socioeconomic backgrounds, they connect to each other using social networks such as Facebook, and share their music. While some of them have built their own recording studios usually in the basements of their houses (such as Yasin), some others simply use a camera to shoot videos of their rapping and then put them on YouTube or share in Facebook groups hoping to get a high number of likes. They adopt cool nicknames, which usually involve English words and are usually prefixed with "Mc" or "Dj", or suffixed with "Style" or "Crew" (Picture 7).

Picture 7. Poster of a rap party in Şanlıurfa.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4DzYYcxrjWo (Retrieved January 12, 2013) *Yener – Çöktü Gece* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCFxPMf9xvE (Retrieved January 12, 2013), *Haylaz – Hayallerimiz Ertelendi Yarına* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pA1Wg70dL2o (Retrieved January 12, 2013), *Sezer Tekinq – Azraille Dans Eder Oldum* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GnctP7x6SYY (Retrieved January 12, 2013).

I interviewed one of them, Yasin, or his "stage name", McKarizma[63]. He is a 20 year-old ambitious arabesk rapper, who was, at the time of the interview, counting the days for "releasing" his first album, which would be available online for free. He set his own recording studio (Picture 8) in the basement of his family house and he was planning to record the album on CDs and distribute them to his relatives and friends. He told me with enthusiasm how he received offers from Bursa and Germany to perform his rap (but his father did not permit him to go), and how he participated in *Yetenek Sizsiniz Türkiye* (see Section 4.3) (but he was eliminated in the second round). He started arabesk rapping in order to better express himself:

> How did I get into music? Everyone has someone they cannot forget. Not everyone is able to pour his heart out. You can share it with others, but it would still not be enough. For example, you love someone, and thus you want to express your love in a different manner. This is why I get into music to reveal what I feel inside. In fact, I tried other genres such as arabesk and metal, but my voice is more suitable for rap, this is why I am arabesk rapping. Occasionally, I gangsta rap, too. The most popular sub-genre of rap is always arabesk rap in Turkey.[64]

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[63] "*MC Charisma*" in English.

[64] "Bu müzik işi nerden esti? Şimdi herkesin bi unutamadığı vardır. Herkes içini dökemez abi. Anlatır birilerine ama, içini dökemez yine de tam olmaz. Nasıl diyim, sevdiği vardır, bunu başka şekillerde dökmek ister. Beni dinlesin de anlasın neler hissettiğimi. Bu yüzden ben müziğe döktüm içimi. Arabesk olsun metal olsun şu olsun bu olsun, bunları da denedim aslında, ama sesim rap'e daha uygun, o yüzden arabesk rap yapıyorum. Gangster da yaptığım da oluyor. Zaten abi bu rap konusunda en çok tutulan şey her zaman arabesk'tir, en çok bu tutulur. Direkt rap diyince insanlarda bi duraklama oluyor özellikle büyüklerde, ama en çok da tutulan arabesk rap bence."

Picture 8. Yasin in his studio with a "crew member" (*eleman*).

He says[65] there are many people doing rap, most of whom mess it up, but he thinks that he is doing it good. Although he is optimistic about his future in arabesk rapping, he also thinks[66] that he might continue doing it as a hobby no matter whether his music becomes popular or not, because his real job is computer-aided drawing.

Solomon (2005:8) observed in 2005 that "most [*members of the Turkish hip-hop community*] seem to have come to rap through an interest in technology and computers, and part of the appeal of rap seems to be that it is music they can make on their PCs at home". Young people can make this music without needing expensive equipments and instruments. Yasin, for example, has his own studio in the basement of his family house. Besides, they do not have to spend long time taking formal courses in order to

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[65] "Şimdi abi bu işi yapan çok kişiler var, batıranlar da çok, hani ben kendimi övmek istemiyorum ama ben kendim güzel yaptığımı düşünüyorum. Dinleyenler ortalama bizim yaşta gençler."

[66] "Ben bu yaptığım müzik işini bi hobi olarak görebilirim ilerde, tutulsun tutulmasın. Benim mesleğim bilgisayar destekli çizim. İşte ilerde işim gücüm olacak, ister istemez hayat değişecek, arkadaş çevresi bi yerde biter, illa ki. Çocuğum olacak onunla ilgilenecem. İlerde daha büyüyünce hayat değişir yani, illa ki."

become a good performer. Mehmet, again with a critical tone, thinks[67] that "it is easier to rap, because one does not need to play an instrument". He argues that "it is nothing but singing fast with a background music". Of course, rapping is not that simple, but Mehmet's view reflects the low logistic requirements for becoming a rapper.

4.4.2. The Apaçi Dance

Among the elements of the wider hip hop culture that gained popularity among lower class youth in Turkey in the recent years are DJing, break dancing and beatboxing. Young people naturalize different music genres and dance styles. The amplitude of these genres and styles, their accessibility via the internet, and the possibility of improvising and synthesizing offer young people a wide space for maneuvering. The *apaçi* dance[68], and its inseparable tune called *apaçi* song[69], emerged as a form of street dance and immediately became very popular in 2010. The dance's appeal lies in its successful concentration of scattered forms of music, dance and style popular among lower class youth into a single form with a catchy tune. The *apaçi* dance could be seen as a blend of electronic dance music, the French *tecktonik*[70] in particular, and Turkish folk dance forms. Journalist Clément Girardot (Mashallah News, 2011) writes the following regarding the connection of the *apaçi* dance and tecktonik:

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[67] "Yani daha kolay galiba rap söylemek filan. Herhangi bi enstrüman çalmana gerek yok, herhangi bi fon müziğini arkaya koyup, hızlı söylüyor işte. Başka da bi şey yok."

[68] Although it is hard to accurately define the *Apaçi* dance, it could be seen as a blend of electronic dance music, the French Tecktonik in particular, and Turkish folk dance forms. Examples could be viewed from the following links: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wt7X-SUtvEM (December 13, 2012), http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4k0i8p8jECQ (December 13, 2012).

[69] The song could be heard from the following link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRSJP96idtQ (Retrieved January 12, 2013).

The following is a version accompanied with *apaçi* dance: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqAztzUgfTA (Retrieved January 12, 2013).

[70] Examples of tecktonik music and dance can be viewed from the following links: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0rqBf6Qvj0I (Retrieved January 12, 2013), http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFj1N5uk5S0 (Retrieved January 12, 2013).

The *Apaçi* dance itself is strongly influenced by the French Tecktonik movement, a specific techno dance and a fashion trend as well, which is rooted in the Belgian and Dutch electro music cultures. The Tecktonik peaked in 2007-2008 when over über-fashionable youngsters invaded dance floors and public squares moving their hands in the air like windmills.[...] Turkey was largely untouched by this phenomena until the *Apaçi* music arrived in 2010. This importing of Tecktonik-like dance to Turkey could be a result of the strong connections that young Turks living in Western Europe keep up with their relatives in Turkey, through social networks and frequent visits.

This dance style and various accompanied songs[71] stormed the country especially in 2010 and 2011. Although it has now significantly lost its popularity, the epithet "*apaçi*", as discussed throughout the thesis, continues to circulate in the language as a pejorative term and as an identity.

For Apaçi Müslüm, for example, the *apaçi* identity is firstly about dancing:

This [*apaçi*] has emerged primarily in the form of dancing. While some people view this as something negative, some others see it as a dance style. For me, it is related to the way you dance. Everyone has his own way of dancing in the *apaçi* style. Well, in fact, it has a standard, related to the form and the rhythm. For example, you watch something and try to be able to do it. I can dance in many different styles. You see other dance forms, salsa for example, and you try to adapt it to yourself. It is *apaçi* dance.[72]

Müslüm and his three friends plan to set up a dance crew by preparing a choreography mixing up salsa, techno and the *apaçi* style. At the time of our first

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[71] Two examples are the following: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8XLRQdPxxzU (Retrieved January 12, 2013) and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39G-QPm9Dpc (Retrieved January 12, 2013).

[72] "Bu apaçilik dans işleriyle filan çıktı, ama bunu kötü anlama yoranlar da var, ama dans olarak görenler de var. Mesela ben çalıştığım halde, sabah 8 akşam 8 çalışıyordum ben, sonra çalışma saatlerim değişti. O yüzden ben bu işi bıraktım. Her akşam eğlenceye takılıyordum. Taksimde. Girip çıktığım mekanlar çok fazla. Dansın stili apaçi deniyor. Herkes kafasına göre oynar. Kafasına göre değil bir standardı da var aslında. Biçimle ritimle alakalı. Mesela bi şey izlersin onu yapmaya çalışırsın, onu yapabilmek için aylarca çalışırsın mesela. Ben her türlü dansı yapabiliyorum, salsa filan."

interview, Müslüm was working as a fisherman twelve hours a day with one day off in fourteen days, but even so he could allocate time for going out and dancing. He loves dancing no matter what music it is, and he practices different styles alone at home. He is proud that his body is very flexible, which enables him to dance in various styles. According to him, what make *apaçis* different from other youth are their fascination with having fun, choice of deliberately ragged clothes, peculiar hairstyles, dance style, and their pursuit for always being different. That is, although dancing is essential in his *apaçi* identity, it has other concomitant characteristics as well.

Similarly, Berkay explains why he identifies himself as *apaçi* by establishing a correlation between dancing and other characteristics:

> For me, being *apaçi* is being lively. We can experience the life more fully, and we can dance freely in our own style. Of course, this identity does not pertain to only dancing; many other characteristics are also included ranging from your dress to your attitudes and hairstyle. But still, you need to prove your *apaçi* identity by dancing. For example, when you enter a place, you say, "Hello, I am *Apaçi* Berkay", but it means nothing if you do not exhibit it in the form of dancing.[73]

Berkay notably says that they can experience the life more fully through this identity. They experience a sort of freedom while dancing as well as in their everyday lives. The fact that they do not have to conform to certain strict style requirements in the *apaçi* style of dancing seem to fit perfectly in their lives, as they want to live free from any discipline and limitation. They enjoy being naughty to a certain extent, and as suggested in the Section 4.1, these behaviors are tolerated and attributed to their *crazy blood*.

Dancing good, among these youth, is a significant source of embodied cultural capital. I have discussed earlier how being a good dancer and exhibiting a remarkable dance performance earn young people prestige, recognition and a form of celebrity

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[73] "Valla abi deli dolu ya, deli dolu kafadan, hayatı mesela gittiğimizde daha çok yaşayabiliyoruz, kendimizce özgür dans edebiliyoruz. Tabii sadece dans değil her türlü şey girebiliyor bu işin içine. Kılığın kıyafetin, tavırların, saç modeli olsun. Hani bir yere gittiğimizde 'Selamunaleyküm ben Apaçi Berkay'. Yani isim olarak değil de dans olarak görüyor insanlar bunu. Mesela sen diyorsun ismim apaçi, ama bunu dansla göstermezsen bi anlamı kalmıyor."

status. Müslüm told me that the way one dances is the primary point of competition, after I asked him whether there are differences between *apaçis* of different neighborhoods:

> There are differences between *apaçi*s of different neighborhoods. For example, you wear low-rise jeans and he wears ripped jeans. When you encounter in a club, you challenge one another, and you compete with him in dancing. There is this kind of competitive tendency between *apaçis*. If he dances worse than you, you say "Brother, you should dance this and this way", or if you want to run him down, "Brother, you just cannot dance, so find yourself another preoccupation".[74]

The category of *delikanlı* now includes practices like dancing which used to be seen as feminine acts and thus excluded from the masculine *delikanlı* identity. Today, young men challenge and compete with one another through rapping and/or dancing. Apart from the usually daytime, alcohol-free and affordable clubs and discos that have been mushrooming in lower class districts; young people dance in other occasions such as wedding ceremonies, birthdays, holidays, soldiers' farewell ceremonies (*asker gecesi*), and so forth. Also, Müslüm and Berkay proudly told me that they do not hesitate to dance anywhere; on the street or in the metro.

Like the *apaçi* as an epithet, the qualities attributed to the *apaçi* style of dancing also differ from one person to another. Yasin, for example, acknowledges that people sometimes call him *apaçi* due to his appearance, but he refuses the label. According to him, what makes someone an *apaçi* is doing nonsense, being a vagabond, and not having a care in the world. He says, "Others may think that I am an *apaçi* after seeing my dress and hairstyle, but I would not like to be called *apaçi*, because it is like, how to

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[74] "Semtlerin apaçileri arasında farklar var, tarzlar arasında değişiklikler var. Mesela sen düşük bel pantolon giyersin, o yırtık pantolon giyer. Bi ortamda filan karşılaşırsan, sen nerde oturuyorsun filan şurda ben de burda. Apaçi dansında mesela kapışalım mı dersin, çıkarsın dans edersin. Bu şekilde rekabet var. O senden iyi dans etmiyosa zaten kardeşim şunu şöyle değil de böyle yap dersin, veya ezmek istiyorsan kardeşim sen dans edemiyorsun dersin sen başka bir şey yap, yapma bunu. Mesela o senden iyi olur, gelir sana laf eder ne biçim dans ediyosun der."

say, you are excluded"[75]. He believes that what differentiates him from an *apaçi* is his being a well-mannered man. He says the following regarding the *apaçi* dance:

> The *apaçi* dance does not have any rules whatsoever. For example, one does not know how to dance, but he tries to dance with foreign music, then you say 'Look at that *apaçi*'. It is like wearing an unusual hairstyle in order to attract others' attention; because everybody wants to stand out and be praised by others. For this reason, in fact, we have this [*apaçi*] tendency as well. For example, I saw a guy who shaved both sides of his hair and dyed the remaining part in the center to red. This guy wants to draw attention by doing something nonsense. Being an *apaçi* is aspiring to have something that no one else has.[76]

Dance serves for these young people as a common language of performance, providing a means for corporeal communication. I have conveyed so far how dance connects young people through quotes from Müslüm, Berkay and Yasin. Similarly, in a brief conversation, Osman[77] narrated the role of dance in his life as follows (my paraphrasing):

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[75] "Benim mesela böyle giyinmem başkalarının gözünde apaçidir, sakalım saçım olsun, kişiye göre değişir. Bana apaçi diyolar ama çekememezliklerinden dolayı. Ben istemem bana apaçi denmesini. Çünkü abi bu nasıl diyim, dediğim gibi "dışlanmak" gibi bi şey bu apaçilik. Ha kendini seven apaçi diyen vardır, bilemiyorum düşünmek lazım bu konuyu."

[76] "Apaçi dansının öyle kuralı filan yok. Bi insan mesela oynamayı bilmez, yabancı müzikte filan, oynamaya çalışır, "şuna bak apaçi" dersin. Saçmalamak yani biraz. İşte saçmla filan oynayım da insanlar bana baksın. İşte dikkat çekmek, çünkü her insan övünmek ister, bi insan bi şey yapar tebrik almak ister, beğenilmek ister, yani bunun devamını getirmek ister. O yüzden bizde de var. Abi şimdi saçmalamak apaçidir, ben saçımı dikerim mesela, saçını boyayan apaçidir. Mesela bi adam saçının kenarlarını kesmiş, ortasını da kıpkırmızıya boyamış. Bu işte dikkat çekmek istiyor saçmalayarak. Kimsede olmayan bi şeye sahip olmak istemek apaçiliktir.

[77] I saw Osman (16) while he was working as an apprentice in his uncle's tea house that I frequented in Kadıköy. After talking briefly about his lifestyle, I informed him about my research and told him that I am interested in doing an interview with him. At first, he agreed to talk to me, but then he hesitated as he thought that his uncle would not permit him to talk to me. I managed to take his phone number and told him that we could meet in his convenient time. In the following weeks, I called him a couple of times, but unfortunately he did not respond.

Dance? Dance is my thing. I dance very well. Young people at my age now dance in such contemporary forms in wedding ceremonies. I am from Siirt but most of my relatives live here in Istanbul; elders don't like us to dance like that, but I am, like most of my peers, not that interested in folkloric dances like *halay*. For example, in a wedding ceremony, people are dancing the *halay*, but when you start dancing in a different [*contemporary*] style, you see everybody pointing at you, and young people you do not know begin joining you shortly.

It appears that listening to music genres such as hip hop and dancing in one's own style to club music have become elements of the habitus of young people. They communicate and compete with each other showing their talents in different forms ranging from rapping to DJing and dancing. Müslüm stated the following regarding his communication with his relatives living in Germany through dance:

I have relatives living in Germany. When I meet their children, I see that there are similar dances. Of course, everyone has his own style of dancing, but still there are similarities. For example, he does break-dance and you do *apaçi* dance; he does electro and you respond with a different figure. We also dance in the same style, not *apaçi* but –for instance- break-dance. I can dance in other styles as well. It is easy to find a common ground. If your body is flexible and if you love dancing, you can always dance with them. You can always improve your skills if you feel like "*I can do this!*".[78]

As is seen in the above quote, dance provides young people with a shared language of performance and enables them to experience an affiliation with other young people living outside national borders. Through such transnational connections, young people experience being part of a global youth culture.

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[78] "Benim Almanyada akrabalarım var, onların çocuklarıyla görüşünce görüyorsun benzer danslar var. Herkesin tarzı kendine ama benzer yine de. Mesela o break dance yapıyor, sen apaçi yapıyorsun, o electro yapıyor atıyorum, sen değişik bir figürle karşılık veriyorsun. Apaçi olmasa da örneğin break dansa sen de karşılık verebiliyorsun. Robot dansları filan oluyor, electro filan. Sadece apaçi dansı ediyorum diye bir şey yok. Bir ortak nokta bulabiliyorsun, eğer ki vücudun esnekse zaten her türlü yaparsın. Dansı seviyorsan, yaparsın hip hop olsun başka dans olsun. Yapabilirim dersen başarırsın yani."

4.4.3. Spectacularization of the Body

As discussed in the Section 2.2, the *maganda/kıro* narrative was reproduced mainly through the "unbefitting" and "disturbing" appearance and practices of the "uncivilized" male body in urban public spheres. The circulation of these pejorative terms, as part of the hegemonic public discourse of cities' invasion by outsiders, continuously defined what qualities are included in and excluded from the proper civilized way of life. Appearance of these outsiders constituted the central motif of the narrative for mainly two reasons: first, "right from out of the fog [*created by the 1980 coup*] emerged a society in which many things existed because they were shown and to the extent they were seen; they acquired value because they were displayed and to the extent they were viewed" (Gürbilek, 2011:21); and second, middle classes' perceptions of *magandas* and *kıros* were based primarily on their appearance, rather than a real social contact and interaction.

As the social hierarchies are expressed in this hegemonic discourse through the appearance of people's bodies, it creates the illusion that one could overcome the exclusion and attain upward mobility in this hierarchy by being attentive to his appearance. Besides, the hierarchy between appearances and manners becomes operative within the excluded class itself, influencing the ways they relate to the wider society. For example, *Crazy Hairdresser* Ahmet observes[79] that men today are more well-groomed than in the past. Especially young men, according to him, are more attentive to their appearance with the motivation to keep up with the times and not to be stigmatized as *kıro*. On his Facebook page, he illustrates the popularity of "*apaçi* hairstyles" among his customers (Picture 9).

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[79] "Bence artık erkekler daha bakımlı. Özellikle gençler arasında kız tavlamak üst düzey diyim, hemen hemen tek çaba bu, ve ben de modaya uyayım, ortama uyayım, kıro veya eski kafa demesinler gibi bir fark var.

1. resim
normal saç kesim|
bu tarz şekilleri
yayınlayınca
1 2
beğeni alırken

2. resim
abartılı fön şekille|
bu tarz şekilleri
yayınlayınca
15 20
beğeni ve yorumla
alıyor..

SİZ OLSANIZ
HANGİ MODELLE|
YAYINLARSINIZ ?|

Like · Comment · Share   1

11 people like this.

Picture 9. Ahmet explains on Facebook why he mostly shares overdone hairstyles suggesting that they attract much more attention.

Among today's urban lower-class youth, spectacular ways of being seen are very prevalent. Yonucu (2008) observed the importance of dress among working-class youth in Zeytinburnu, a squatter district of Istanbul, in the early-2000s and stated: "Today, dress is an important issue among the youth of Zeytinburnu. They not only imitate the attire of the 'modern' and wealthy urbanites, but also look down upon the ones who cannot afford to dress like the middle class". As I have shown in Section 2.3, the *apaçi* narrative reproduced by middle classes hinges largely on the unprecedented modes of appearance crafted by lower class youth. In order to *stand out* from the crowds and to construct their masculinities, their physical bodies become their primary instruments (cf. Winge, 2003). Interestingly, they do not negotiate and exhibit their masculine identities through a preoccupation with physical dexterity and muscular strength (cf.

Mora, 2012), but primarily with their pursuit of looking different and unique through hairstyles, dresses, accessories, tattoos, or -in Müslüm's case- the flexibility of the body.

Young people compete with each other through their dress, hairstyle, accessories or cell phones. Yasin, for example, states the following regarding this competition:

> For example, I bought this blue Converse pair of shoes last year; many people came to me and asked where they could find the same. Everybody has this struggle for competition. I participated in *Yetenek Sizsiniz*, for example, and then I saw that many people became my fans on Facebook or watched my videos. I think everyone has this tendency to compete and to show off, through things you possess such as your mobile phone, your car, or your girlfriend.[80]

Similarly, the following quote from Müslüm reflects his constant struggle for looking different from others:

> I dared to have many different hairstyles, I stop at nothing. I take the trouble to sit in the hairdresser's chair for like three hours to have them. You tell the hairdresser that you want to have something different, for example, he wrote "*ringo*" on this side and did something else on the other side of my head. He was going to take photos of that hairstyle and put them up on the walls to show his customers what he is capable of, but I stopped him from doing it. You pay 50 Liras just for a hairstyle. I stopped him, because I did not want others to have the same hairstyle, because you want to stand out in life.[81]

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[80] "Ben mesela geçen sene mavi converse ayakkabı aldım, geçen senenin modası. Arkadaşlar geliyo yanıma, nerden aldın ben de alacam. Yani herkeste böyle bir kapışma çabası. İster istemez böyle bi kapışma oluyor. Mesela Yetenek Sizsiniz'e katıldık, sonra bi bakıyosun Facebookta hayran sayın bin kişi artıyor, videolarını izleyenler artıyor, arkadaş olmak istiyorlar filan yani. İlla ki herkesin içinde vardır yani rekabet filan, gösteriş. Böyle sahip oldugun şeyler üzerinden cep telefonu olur, araba olur, kız arkadaş olur."

[81] "Neler yaptırdım ben saçıma filan hiç çekinmem. Kuaförde mesela üç saat oturuyorum bunları yaptırmak için. Değişik bir şey yaptırmak istiyorum diyorsun, buraya "ringo" yazdı mesela, öbür tarafa başka bir şey yaptı filan. Böyle fotoğrafları çekip dükkana filan asacaktı, ben vazgeçirdim. Hani bu model bi şeyler yapabiliyoruz diyecekti müşterisine. Sırf bunlar için 50 milyon para ödüyorsun kuaföre. Ben vazgeçirdim asmaktan, çünkü başkası görsün istemedim, başkası da yapsın istemedim, o yüzden vazgeçirdim. Farklı olmaya çalışıyorsun çünkü hayatta."

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This competition on appearance through consumption inevitably creates a separate market for such commodities. Today, there are certain shops that sell spectacular, and usually fake-branded, clothes affordable for lower-class youth and hairdressers popular among them. Alp was working in such a shop, one of many on a street in Kadıköy, Istanbul. He told me that their customers are youngsters, aged mostly between 15 and 25, coming from everywhere in the city. According to him, most young men prefer flamboyant t-shirts and jeans. Prices were affordable; a pair of jeans for example was around 25-30 Liras. He said that trends change rapidly, and although he is also young (24), he sometimes cannot make sense of the demands of young people. According to him, the only motive in the minds of today's youth is being different from others, as "even little boys want girls around them and they act and dress accordingly".

As part of my fieldwork, I also visited and talked to hairdressers[82]. In the interviews, they all underlined that today's male youth are much more concerned with their appearance and cleanliness. For very low prices, men's hairdressers offer a broad array of hairstyles as well as grooming and beauty services such as manicure/pedicure, face-pack, epilating wax, and so forth. According to Ahmet, for example, "we leave behind the understanding that men with hairy body are more preferable, which means that we are getting Europeanized".[83] He explains the reason behind young men's inclination towards spectacular styles as follows:

> Young men aspire to be different from others and be popular among girls. I cannot really understand the music genres they listen to, I only laugh at them. But people are dying for these songs, mostly arabesk rap, they set these songs as their cell phone ringtones, all of them aspire to become a rapper. I think, such things become widespread due to imitation. There are many people coming per day for having a blow-dry.

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[82] The *apaçi* style continues to attract media attention. One of my ethnographic sites was recently covered in a feature article entitled "*Herkes bir günlüğüne apaçi olabilir*" (Everyone can be *apaçi* for one day) published on *Akşam* daily on November 4, 2012. Online (in Turkish): http://www.aksam.com.tr/herkes-bir-gunlugune-apaci-olabilir--147662h.html

[83] "Hani laf var ya "kıllı erkek daha makbuldür", Şu an o aklı geride bırakıyoruz. Ağda yapmayan çok nadir müşterim var. Kimi müşterim ağdayı nerden temin edebilirim diyor, ben de yardımcı oluyorum veya koltukaltı göğüs kılları almak için özel makinalar falan temin ediyorum, Bu demek oluyor ki Avrupalaşıyoruz."

I have customers who do not step out of home without blow-dry. They want to attract attention by growing sideburns or growing hair at the back of the neck. They all want others to say, "This kid is different".[84]

The increased significance of men's grooming, or the commodification of the working-class male body, is another factor behind the transition from a more traditional and modest appearance, which was caricatured through the labels of *maganda* and *kıro*, to a more spectacular and well-groomed male body, which is excluded this time through the construct of *apaçi*.

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[84] "Gençlerin bu tarzlara yönelmesinin amacı özentilik. Herkesten farklı olayım, kızların gözdesi olmak diye sıralayabiliriz dinledikleri müzikleri cidden anlayamıyorum arsız bela diye sanatçı var belki dinlemişsinizdir ☺Sadece gülüyorum ☺ ama millet onlar için ölüyo telefonları sadece bu tarz sarkılar yani arabesk rap ve lise ortamları herkes rapçi olmaya özeniyor. Bence herşey özentilik sayesinde çoğalıyor veya yayılıyor. Günde kaç kişi fön için geliyor, fönsüz dışarı çıkmayan müşterilerim var. Faulleri uzatıp, enseleri abartılı uzatıp, saçları komple uzatıp ilgi çekeyim, herkes "bu çocuk farklı" desin ☺ derdinde."

enim pazarım

Fotoğraf: Hüseyin ALSANCAK

Bence hamburger sağlıklı çünkü içinde et var

Kuaförden sonra yemek için Taksim'in girişindeki Burger King'e giderim. Burayı terasından dolayı tercih ediyorum. Hamburgerin içinde et olduğu için sağlıklı ve iyi olduğunu düşünüyorum. Boş yere bu restoranlar açık değil ya? Menümü alıp yedikten sonra terasta İstiklal'i seyrederek sigaramı içiyorum.

Picture 10. From the feature article entitled "*Bir Apaçinin Güncesi*" (A typical day of an *apaçi*" published on *Hürriyet* daily on November 18, 2012. Online (in Turkish): http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/pazar/21953426.asp

The music genres and modes of visual self-expression popular among lower class youth are interrelated, as young people also consume these music genres visually. For example, electro house music, and its accompanied tecktonik dance, has its own fashion that includes tight jeans and Mohawk-style haircut, which are also among the main markers of the *apaçi* style (Picture 10). Similarly, the typical visual means of prestige in contemporary hip-hop which "must shine, floss, or bling" (Thompson, 2011:30) are also embraced and consumed by lower class young people in Turkey. Flashy accessories, multicolored and shiny clothes, carefully-done ostentatious

hairstyles, and less-commonly, tattoos turn the bodies of young people into spectacular display objects (Pictures 11 and 12).

Picture 11. Apaçi Müslüm
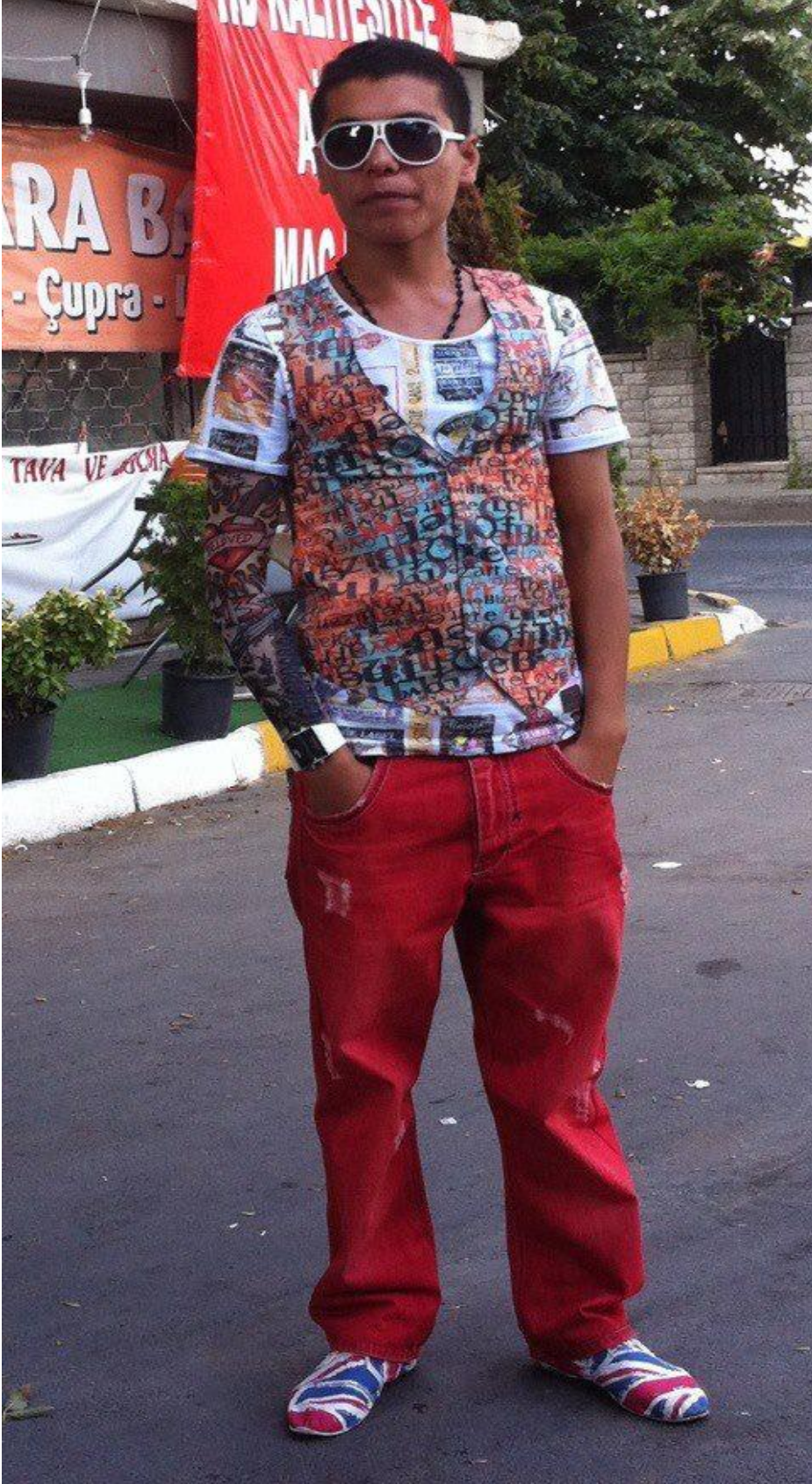
Picture 12. Apaçi Müslüm

I argue that such visual practices of young people reflect their discontent with the mainstream modes of visibility and their attempts to be seen as global consumers by visually transcending the national geographical and cultural boundaries. While the general tendency in the dominant media and academic, as well as in the everyday, discourses is to label young people who show such practices as *wannabes*, I argue that they do not try to be or look like others (middle classes) by imitating them. Instead, as I conveyed examples throughout this thesis, I see these efforts as their attempts to become themselves; to become unique. Mehmet, for example, readily classifies his spectacular peers as imitators of wealthier urbanites, but then realizes that these modes of self-expression do not make them similar to their middle class counterparts:

> I think one's economic situation largely matters in this respect. In fact, I have never seen a rich friend who subscribes to the *apaçi* style. They also go to discos but they would not dance like *apaçis*, and they also have their hair done but still not like *apaçis*. I think they are normal.[85]

Similarly, when Müslüm dresses up and heads to the middle class districts of Istanbul, he does not want to blend in with the crowd, but instead he wants to stand out with his own look, which he wants to be unique. Therefore, it is more appropriate to see this spectacularization as the attempt of the disadvantaged youth to assert their presence in a social system that seeks to culturally and spatially confine them to certain quarters.

4.5. Neoliberal Subjectivity among Lower Class Youth

Stuart Hall (2011:723) suggests, while discussing the "neoliberal revolution" in Britain, that "in the domain of global popular culture, the iconic status of the celebrity has become paramount", quoting the following observation of Suzanne Moore (Guardian, 9 April 2011): "We have become more like America, where the chances of someone poor making it, despite the American dream, have grown smaller. That this

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[85] "Bence maddi durumun çoğunlukla etkisi var. Hiç öyle zengin olup da apaçi takılan bir arkadaşımı görmedim ben yani aslında. Yani onlar da gitse de diskoya öyle dans etmez, saçlarını yaptırsa da öyle yaptırmaz, normal yani onlar."

period coincides with the huge rise of celebrity culture is surely no coincidence. The idea that an ordinary person can become extraordinary and famous, bypassing the normal social routes, is a necessary fiction". During my ethnographic research, I observed that poor young people internalize, and subscribe to the fantasy of, the neoliberal ideology that they can make it if they become extraordinary and competitive enough, even though their chances for social mobility seem to be becoming more and more limited. It is evident not only in their eagerness to display their talents in popular talent shows or on the internet, but also in their constant engagement in competitive interactions with others in their everyday lives. As Brown (2003:40) argues, "through discourse and policy promulgating its criteria, neoliberalism produces rational actors and imposes a market rationale for decision making in all spheres".

I observed that the neoliberal rationality was quite prevalent among my interlocutors who were competitive and self-responsible individuals in their everyday interactions. As I also conveyed earlier, Müslüm told me that he had once had a hair cut; on one side of his head he had the hairdresser write "*apaçi*" and on the other side to draw a heart with arrow. Then, the hairdresser wanted to take a picture of his hair and display it to the customers, but Müslüm did not give his permission as he wanted to be the only one who has that hairstyle. In other words, he wanted to enjoy having something spectacular and unique for a while before it is imitated by someone else. Similarly, he told me that he hangs out in many different places, but mostly he prefers not to take photos and put them on Facebook, because he does not want others to learn and come to those places. He has built fame in his neighborhood for being a spectacular and daring party boy who does not hesitate to do crazy things, and aims to control and maintain this fame. He is aware of, and happy with, this reputation.[86] According to him, the belief "I can do everything" is a part of the *apaçi* identity. He has a positive sense of self; he believes that the fact that he went to school only until the third grade has prepared him for the life, as he has found the opportunity to become a skilled person in many different fields. In other words, he presents frequent switching between low-paying and unsecure jobs as something positive. He does not attribute his current low socioeconomic conditions to structural factors or to his class position, but he believes

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[86] "If you come to Sarıyer asking around about me, you would certainly find me, because everyone knows me here".
(Mesela sen gelsen Sarıyer'e Müslüm desen birilerine, hangi Müslüm, apaçi Müslüm, beni kesin bulursun. Neden çünkü beni herkes tanıyor).

that he can make it if he does the right things. When I asked him about what he felt during his previous job where he served in a fish restaurant to wealthy customers, he gave the following response:

> I think there is no unfairness in living conditions. For example, I am working in Yeniköy[87], usually rich people come. I do not feel bad in such situations, why would I? Because everyone has their own lives and conditions. He is rich and you are not, but you do not have the chance of opposing this fact. He can go somewhere by his own car, but you can also go there by your motorcycle. I know people who are rich but unhappy. I am happy, because I can do whatever I want, I earn my own money. For example, a friend of mine takes money from his father to go on holiday, but I can also go after working for five months and saving some money. I mean, I can do it as well.[88]

Today's *apaçi* culture represents the heyday of what Nurdan Gürbilek (1992 and 2001) describes as a culture of desire that emerged in the second half of the 1980s and continued in the 1990s. This culture, which "invited people to satisfy their desires right now and right here", replaced that of the 1970s, which had been based "not only on saving of money but also on saving of desire". This new culture, according to Gürbilek, replaced the reproachful arabesk of Orhan Gencebay, which advised patience and resignation and emphasized the impossibility between desire and its satisfaction, by the more rural, more carnal and more assertive arabesk of İbrahim Tatlıses, which is crystallized in his song "*Ben de İsterem*" (I want too). Although there are examples of abstention and withdrawal from contemporary life and more modest ways of being,

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[87] Yeniköy is a small neighborhood in Istanbul located on the European shores of the Bosphorus. It is home to expensive seafood restaurants.

[88] "Bence hayat şartlarında adaletsizlik yok, neden olsun. İşte ben Yeniköy'de çalışıyorum zenginler geliyor filan. Ben kendimi kötü hissetmiyorum bu durumda. Çünkü herkesin kendine göre bir hayatı var, onun hayat şartları farklı seninki farklı. Onun mesela mal varlığı var. Onda var da neden bende yok diyemezsin ki öyle bir şansın yok. O mesela arabayla gider bir yere sen motorla gidersin, benim gücüme gitmez niye gücüme gitsin. Ben mesela bunu yaşayamıyorum diye üzülmem. Ama yaşamak isterim. Yaşamak için de ne olur mesela; bir arkadaşın babasından para alır gider tatile, ben de beş ay boyunca çalışırım giderim kendi tatilime, giderim işte diyorum Antalya'ya Bodrum'a. Gidersin banka hesabı açarsın para biriktirirsin. Sen de yapabilirsin yani. Niye ben kendimi kötü hissedeyim. Başkası zengin olur filan ben mutlu olurum, başkalarının iyiliğini isterim."

what is most visible and popular among today's lower-class youth is asserting one's presence and subscription to the belief that they can change their existing conditions. In a popular culture which values individual innovativeness and interestingness, young people try to present themselves as unique images that matter as long as they are consumable commodities. Being seen as cool and becoming popular especially in the eyes of the opposite sex are the main benefits for such spectacular youth in their everyday lives. McKarizma says in one of his songs: "Nobody cared about me when my name was Yasin, yet my friends proliferated after it became 'Karizma'"[89]. The self is constructed as an image for one's own gaze and sense of self as well as for the gaze of others, which certainly requires venues for visibility. In what follows, I will discuss the mobility of lower class youth in the urban space.

4.6. Mobility in the Urban Space

One of the most significant features of contemporary neoliberal Istanbul is the increasing separation of spaces; as inhabitants of many lower-class districts are being forcibly displaced through "cleanup" agendas, gated communities are continuing to mushroom everywhere in the city[90], and urban spaces are being designed physically and symbolically for the use of different social groups. Residents of a gated community in the study of Serife Genis (2007:773), for example, "describe themselves as urban, modern, Western and secular, and express a strong aversion to urban life in Istanbul, which they found alienating, chaotic, crowded and polluted with an unpleasant socio-cultural heterogeneity and lacking infrastructure". The life outside the gated towns is mostly associated with poverty, and as Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu (2008:35) observes, "signs of poverty in and of themselves are perceived as dangerous and threatening".

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[89] In Turkish: *Adım Yasin'ken kimse takmadı, Karizma olunca dostlar çoğaldı"*. The music video is available online on http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VixX7gVimKE (December 13, 2012).

[90] For the transformations of Istanbul's urbanscape and particularly for proliferating gated residential compounds; see, Bartu Candan and Kolluoğlu (2008).

However, in this socially and economically highly segregated Istanbul, young people from lower classes assert their presence in the city by insistently transgressing the symbolic and spatial boundaries designated for them. They are intensively mobile and they never hesitate to perform their identities in different parts of the spectacle-city. For example, Müslüm told me that he never shies away from dancing in public places such as the subway or the street. This is a trend similar to what Teresa Caldeira (2012:407) notes for lower-class youth in São Paulo that "they move frequently for leisure or simply to enjoy the city. While the middle and upper classes have enclosed themselves in fortified enclaves and enjoy the city behind closed car windows, the young urban performers enjoy it openly, everywhere, in detail. Moreover, they assert their right to do this just for the sake of doing it".

On a summer night in 2012, I met four young men sitting in front of a shop on Istiklal Street in Beyoğlu, a district that is considered the heart of today's Istanbul with its famous clubs, restaurants and shops. These well-groomed young men (aged 17-19), who brought their refreshments with them, were cheering for Göztepe, an Izmir-based soccer team playing in the second division. I wanted to join them and they welcomed me very cordially. After we started talking, I learned that they normally live in Ümraniye, one of the largest working-class districts located on the Asian side of Istanbul, and they had come to Istiklal to spend the night there. I also learned, after asking why they supported Göztepe but not the big teams of Istanbul, that none of them was from Izmir, nor did they actually supported Göztepe; but they cheered for the team just because they found it cool. They told me that they sometimes do the same (spending the night outside) in parks in their own neighborhood, but being in Beyoğlu is very different, because it is the center of the city and they see a lot of people here that they do not know. During the time after I had left them there, I kept coming across similar groups of young people spending the night at "the heart of the city".

Apaçi Müslüm also told me a similar story about his mobility and his way of asserting his presence throughout Istanbul:

> I am such a man who wandered around Istanbul with 'apaçi' written on my head. It was written on one side; there was the shape of a heart on the other side. Taksim, Ortaköy, Bebek, Osmanbey... I mean I went around everywhere throughout Istanbul. Sometimes people give big

reactions. People ask about how and where I had it done. Some say 'Are you crazy?', some others ask if my parents are happy with it. Well, such instances make you feel happy inside. Without self-confidence, you can never dare to do such things. People notice you. For example, if you were to see me on the street with my ripped jeans with thirty holes, you would not help but look at me.[91]

Through these interventions, young people insistently transgress the symbolic and spatial boundaries designated for them by contemporary neoliberal policies that are concerned more with exclusion than inclusion. They transform and leave their marks on the public spaces of the city. On the other hand, their eagerness to be mobile and visible is usually seen by upper class urbanites as an invasion and contamination. In the neoliberal Istanbul where institutional efforts to promote it as a world-class global city have been generating a façade of material and moral orderliness (Potuoğlu-Cook, 2006:650), young people bring to the fore what is beyond that façade. Although they largely subscribe to the tenets of the neoliberal order, they do it in their own peculiar ways and they reject to stay confined to the spaces where they are supposed to belong. This, in return, heats up the class conflict over the city, in which middle classes constantly seek to find and create "safe and clean" spaces as well as spatially and discursively excluding lower classes, whereas lower classes insistently claim their rights to the city, sometimes merely through their mobility and visibility and sometimes by "being a threat against the middle classes" (Yonucu, 2008:63).

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[91] "Ben kafama 'apaçi' yazdırıp Türkiye'yi gezmiş adamım. İstanbul çapında gezmediğim yer kalmadı. Bu tarafta mesela, yan taraftan baktığın zaman okunuyor. Diğer tarafta da kalp var. Taksim olsun, Ortaköy, Bebek, Sarıyer işte Osmanbey, yani tüm yerlere gidiyordum ben İstanbul çapında. Gezme amaçlı. Mesela sen gezme amaçlı buraya geliyorsun, ben de gezme amaçlı oraya gidiyorum. Çok büyük tepki verenler oluyor mesela, 'aaa nasıl yaptırdın', 'nerde yaptırdın' diyenler oluyor. 'Neye güvenip de buna kalkışıyorsun' diyenler oluyor mesela, 'ailen karşılık vermiyor mu' diyenler oluyor. Var öyle çok şeyler diyenler var. Yolda yürüyorsun, 'aaa n'apmış' diyorlar apaçi yazdırmış kafasına. İçten içe mutlu oluyosun tabii. Kendine güvenmesen zaten böyle bi şeye kalkışamazsın. İnsanlar seni farkediyor, zaten giyiminden, saç stilinden her türlü her yerde farkedilirsin. Ben giymişim otuz tane delikli kot mesela, sen beni yolda görsen gözüne çarpmaz mı, imkanı yok çarpar."

4.7. Hierarchies, Tendencies, Tensions, Contradictions: The Apaçi Culture Seems Very Alternative, but Is It Really So?

As I discussed in the Section 3.1, youth is mostly framed by the adult society in moral panics (cf. Hebdige, 1979), and particularly the working class youth is represented in middle class discourses as dangerous people and their neighborhoods as "no go areas" (cf. Comaroff and Comaroff 2005, Yonucu 2005). During my fieldwork, I observed that this moral panic is reproduced by working class youth themselves. The people I interviewed told me that they are not happy with the current situation of the society and not optimistic about its future mostly giving examples from "the culture", at the heart of which they live. The following words of Müslüm illustrate this feeling:

> I am not happy with Turkey's current situation at all; especially concerning youth. Even little kids smoke weed now, someone needs to put a lid on this. The police catch a drug dealer, but another one keeps selling it. They wait outside my neighborhood but do not raid inside. They know what is going on there but do not intervene. It's really weird. For example, there is this 10-year-old kid. He does not give up smoking weed everyday no matter how hard you beat him. There are many kids like this one; they steal to smoke it. Let's say, your older sister has a laptop, would you sell it and go buy weed? These kids do. Such problems are very common in Turkey.[92]

He thinks that he would leave his current neighborhood (Çayırbaşı, Sarıyer) when he has a child in the future:

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[92] "Ben Türkiye'nin halini hiç iyi görmüyorum. Gençlerle ilgili özellikle, çoluk çocuğun elinde esrar var artık, bu işe bi dur demek lazım. Mesela ben bu işi yapıyorum diyelim esrar satıyorum, beni yakalıyo polis ama sonra benden sonra birisi satmaya devam ediyor. Bitmiyor yani bu. Bizim mahallenin çıkışında bekliyor mesela polis, ama içeri girip basmıyorlar. Biliyorlar içeride satıldığını ama girmiyorlar. Tuhaf yani, heryerde kaçak sigara satılıyor, buna bi dur demeleri lazım. Köylerde bile artık kaçak sigara satılıyor, bu da bakkalların filan ekmeğini etkiliyor. Yok abi türkiye'nin gidişatı hiç iyi değil. Mesela 10 yaşında çocuk var, her gün döv döv ne yaparsan yap o esrarı içmekten vazgeçiyor. Senin karşında hap atıyor ya, yemin ediyorum böyle bi şey yok, dövüyosun akıllanmıyor. Bizim orda çok var mesela 10 yaşında çocuklar, bunu içebilmek için hırsızlık yapıyor çocuklar. Senin şimdi mesela ablanın laptopu var, onu satıp da esrar almaya gider misin? Onlar yapıyo işte. İşte bunlar çok var Türkiye aleminde."

I would not live here when I have a child. I would try to keep myself away from these places to raise my children better. I would live in a housing estate or something. I would run up a debt and buy a house in order to get away from these places, because you have to! It is very tough to raise children here; profanity, drugs and things like that are very common. For example, if you live in a housing estate, your kid would encounter maybe twenty percent of this filth, and it's ok. I would never let him go to Taksim at night, buy weed etc.[93]

During the fieldwork, I heard stories related to drug use for many times. Müslüm told me that he does not do drugs, because he does not need it, as he is able to have fun drinking only alcohol. However, he stated that he is an exception and no young men would go clubbing without taking drugs. All of my interlocutors were in consensus that drug dealing and use are much more common today when compared to the past. A correlation seems evident between the increased drug use and the increased popularity of clubbing and dancing among lower class youth (cf. Yonucu, 2005). Mehmet recounted how the *apaçi* style and culture had become widespread in his neighborhood as follows:

This all started around when I was 10 [*eight years ago*]. I don't have a clue why it did. Before that, we did not have such people in the neighborhood. Then, they started to change; I don't know if it was all of a sudden or little by little. Smoking weed is quite common among them, there were dealers in proximity to the neighborhood, and they would buy weed and smoke together. They started to go to discos, or grow hair at the back of the neck. I also did it as I was also attracted by this new style, but I didn't go too far. However, they eventually subscribed to it more. They were my friends, they began to have different hairstyles or wear pink shiny t-shirts. Skinny-leg jeans and clothes like that; I didn't know that there were such jeans. I was wondering how they found them.

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[93] "Benim çocuğum olunca burda oturmam abi şahsen. Buralardan kendimi uzak tutmaya çalışırım, çocuklarımın iyi yetişmesi için, bi sitede filan yaşarım. Bir borcun altına girerim, o yükün altına girerim ev alırım buralardan kurtulmak için. Mecbursun. Buralarda çocuk yetiştirmek çok zor, küfür, esrar, o, bu, çok yaygın. Hani bir sitede otursan, bu kadarını görmese de yüzde yirmisini görür, o kadarını yine görür, onda sıkıntı yok. Hayatta izin vermem mesela gitsin Taksime filan, esrar alsın vs."

I guess, I would have been like them if I had spent more time with them, like attending the same school.[94]

Yasin, similarly, told[95] me that they do drugs in special occasions such as weddings and soldiers' farewell nights. He also talks about drugs in his songs, which I observed is quite common in arabesk rap. In short, it could be argued that drugs have become part of the habitus of lower class young men. It seems not a coincidence that *kopmak* (breaking loose) is perhaps the motto of *apaçi* youth. Müslüm and Berkay told me that *kopma figürleri* (figures/moves of breaking loose) are distinctive signs of the *apaçi* dance. It could be argued that drugs enable them to extend the limited leisure time (cf. Hebdige, 1979), to *break loose* from their living conditions and to experience different *worlds* as different subjects. I argue therefore that there is a reciprocal relationship between drug use and young people's constant efforts to transcend the spatial, cultural and symbolic boundaries imposed upon them. That is, the experience of being high on drugs simultaneously feeds and is fed by their efforts to negotiate space, masculinity, and their social standing.

Many times during the fieldwork, I heard seemingly contradictory statements. For example, in the hair salon, which is frequented by *apaçi*s and which built a fame even in the popular media (see footnote 82) as "the hair salon of *apaçis*", one of the hairdressers told me that he would not do even a single *apaçi* hair if he could. Another

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[94] "Ben 10 yaşındayken filan başladı böyle bi şey. Niye başladı pek bi fikrim yok. Ondan öncesinde filan bizim mahallede yoktu bunlar, işte altı yedi sene öncesine kadar. Ondan sonra, değişmeye filan başladılar niyeyse, herkeste birden mi oldu, yavaş yavaş mı oldu bilmiyorum. Ot filan esrar içme de çok. Bizim mahallede biraz yukarı gidince torbacılar oluyordu ordan alıp takılıyorlardı. Diskoya filan gitmeye başladılar, işte saçların enseyi uzatmaya filan başladılar. Ben de uzattım enseyi bi ara ama, ben de özeniyordum buna ama fazla ileri gitmedim sonradan. Onlar daha benimsedi bunu, benim arkadaşlarım, işte saç stilleri gibi şeyler, mesela böyle pembe pırıl pırıl tişörtler falan giymeye başladılar. Pantolonlar kıyafetler filan, pantolonların paçaları filan dar oluyordu, ben bilmiyordum merak ediyordum nasıl yaptırıyorlar diye. Ondan öncesinde yoktu. Ben de mesela onların gittiği okulda filan okusam büyük ihtimal ben de öyle olurdum herhalde."

[95] "Şimdi yani, allaha şükür bağımlı değiliz abi. Yani özel günlerde abi, bayramda düğünlerde. Artık çok daha yaygın. Artık mahallede satıyolar abi. Abi seni kendime yakın gördüm anlatıyım yani ☺ biz kuru içiyoruz takılıyoruz yani, düğünlerde, bayramlarda, asker gecelerinde. İlla bi şey olacak yani. Mesela sen gelirsin misafirimiz olursun, o zaman. Veya düğün olur o zamanlar yani."

one said[96] that *apaçis* come from *varoş* neighborhoods and he would prefer not to have them in the salon as they "smell the place up with their greasy hair". Or, as I conveyed above, Müslüm thinks that he would never live in his current neighborhood when he has children, but at the same time he is proud of his lifestyle and proud that he is from Sarıyer. Or, Yasin "warns" men who wear earrings (Section 4.1) although he says that "one should not judge a person by his looks" and although he also tries to move beyond the mainstream ways of being seen attributed to *delikanlı* men; and he thinks that dying hair is among the practices of *apaçis*, which he refuses to be called, but he confesses that he once dyed his hair, too. Or, they talk about their problems with their parents and relatives, but they say that they would not permit their children in the future to do things they do not approve. Or, Müslüm and Yasin subscribe to the new forms of self-expression with great passion, but at the same time they both think that these practices come from abroad as part of foreign powers' efforts to spoil Turkish youth.

This confusion is observed also in their views of and relations with girls. As I conveyed earlier, they want to be liked by girls and they want girls around them. Müslüm, for example, says that he prefers those clubs where women constitute at least half of the people present. He also talks about an ex-girlfriend of his, with whom he would hang out until the morning and her mother would trust Müslüm. However, when I ask him about his possible reaction if he had a daughter, he says he would never allow her to do the same:

> I would never give my permission to my daughter; I would smash her face in. I have nieces, for instance, I would certainly beat them if they do such a thing. First I talk, but if they keep doing it, I would beat them. For example, there was this wedding. Everything was going good; we were having fun, and that. My cousin was sitting beside me; I saw her ogling at a boy. She even started talking to him. I pulled and slapped her in front of everyone in the ceremony. My uncle came and asked me why I did it, and I told him to look after his daughter. I mean, how would she dare to do that? The fact that she is older than me does not matter at all.

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[96] "Abi bunlar varoş gençleri, buraya geliyorlar buradan işte ortamlara akıyorlar. Gelmeseler daha iyi yani, bir geliyor fön çekiyorsun, tüm dükkanı kokutuyor yağlı saçlarıyla."

I can do the same, because I am a man, no one can say anything. But she cannot, especially when she is with me.[97]

Similarly, Yasin told me the following after I asked him what he thinks about the general state of affairs in Turkey:

I think the situation is changing for the worse. For example, there is this photo circulating on Facebook, perhaps you have seen it, there are soldiers from the War of Independence on the one side, and there are two girls from the present time on the other. The picture says, "We saved the country this way, and now we are losing it this way". Girls of today dress immodestly. This way the country is going worse. For me, what is most precious in a girl is her unkissed lips. *[Me: Don't you kiss your girlfriend?]* Well, I kiss my girlfriend as well. I don't know, there are girls to marry and girls to have fun. On the other hand, men are different.[98]

These contradictory views seem to suggest that they struggle to negotiate between their everyday experiences and aspirations and the mainstream macro discourses that influence their perceptions such as nationalism, class divisions, or the paternalistic family structure. That is, they shake the contours of, for example, the spatial segregation between classes, proper masculinity, or man-woman relationships;

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[97] "Benim kızım olsa hayatta izin vermem, ağzını burnunu dağıtırım. Yeğenlerim var mesela, onlar böyle şeyler yapsa kesin döverim. Önce anlatırım sonra anlamazsa döverim. Öyle şey olur mu. Mesela düğün vardı bizim köyde Terkosda. Herneyse gittik herşey çok güzel. Benim köyde yeğenlerim var. Dayımın kızı yanımda, bakıyorum bir çocukla kesişiyor. Sanıyor ki biz cahiliz anlamıyoruz. Gidiyo muhabbet ediyor filan çocukla. Ben gittim bunu çocuğun yanından aldım iki tane tokatladım bunu düğünün ortasında. Dayım geldi sordu neden tokatladın? Dedim sahip çık bu kızına, benim yanımdan ayrılıyor gidip elin çocuklarıyla muhabbet ediyor. Bu nasıl cesaret yani, tamam benden büyük olabilirsin. Ama benden büyüklüğü hiç önemli değil. Aynı şeyi ben yaparım, ben erkeğim, bana hiç kimse karışamaz. Ama o yapamaz benim yanımda. Büyük olması filan önemli değil benim için."

[98] "Valla ülkenin durumu kötüye gidiyor abi. Mesela facebookta bi fotoğraf var, belki görmüşsündür, bi tarafta kurtuluş savaşındaki askerler diğer tarafta da şimdiki zamandan iki kız. "böyle kurtardık, böyle kaybediyoruz" diye. Şimdiki kızlar filan işte tayt giyiyorlar, açık saçık kıyafetler. Böyle böyle kötüye gidiyor işte. Bana göre bir kızın en büyük hazinesi öpülmemiş dudaklarıdır. Yani ben de öpüyorum kız arkadaşımı da ☺, yani evlenilecek kız var eğlenilecek kız var şimdi. Sonuçta erkek farklı."

yet they mostly lack a coherent language to base and express their views, and therefore they reproduce mainstream discourses. For example, they incorporate elements of style and behavior that were previously rejected as feminine into their *delikanlı* identities, but they maintain the sexist and homophobic language inherent in the construction of *delikanlı*. Therefore, there seems to be a continuity in the mainstream discourses. In the Conclusion, I will pick up where I am leaving off here and offer my concluding remarks by wrapping up the entire discussion.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

At the first glance, *apaçi* seems quite alternative. To say the least, in the Turkish context, it is intriguing to see a young *ülkücü*, who frequents the *ülkü ocağı* (local bureau of the ultranationalist grey wolves), wearing a shining pink t-shirt with his gel-applied Mohawk-style haircut. This is exactly what makes these spectacular styles so appealing and attention-grabbing. However, seeing the substantial continuity in the same old mainstream discourses, one cannot help but think that it is only the façade that is different, but the substance remains the same. But we know that the façade does matter.

As Dick Hebdige (1979:17-18-19) writes on the spectacular subcultural styles emerged in the post-war Britain, emergence of such styles "signaled in a spectacular fashion the breakdown of consensus […] interrupting the process of normalization […] as a symbolic violation of the social order". According to him, it is the objections and contradictions, inherent in the hegemonic hierarchical structuring of the society, "that find expression in subculture". He puts a particular emphasis on the punk style, suggesting that it emerged as a "semantic disturbance" that violated, mutated and extended the existing codes and meanings of the society.[99]

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[99] It needs to be noted that the above approach of addressing spectacular styles which originated as part of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) has been criticized and extended from many perspectives; such as its over-emphasis "upon the role of mass-produced consumer items in the articulation of forms of working-class 'resistance'" (Bennett, 1999:601), over-emphasis on young people's capacity for rebellion and resistance (De Boeck and Honwana, 2005:5), "neglect of the young people who conform in many ways to social expectation" (Chambers, 2005:25), and "their exclusive focus on male cultural actors (McRobbie and Garber, 1993; as quoted in Bucholtz, 2002:537). In the Section 3.1, I reviewed in greater detail the literature on the study of youth and their cultural practices in order to refine my approach of studying contemporary spectacular youth styles in Turkey. Part of the criticism is directed against the use of the term "subculture" as it assumes unity and coherence within the groups in

Hebdige (1979: 92-93-94) discusses the typical journey of a spectacular subculture as follows:

> The emergence of a spectacular subculture is invariably accompanied by a wave of hysteria in the press. This hysteria is typically ambivalent: it fluctuates between dread and fascination, outrage and amusement. [...] Style in particular provokes a double response: it is alternately celebrated (in the fashion page) and ridiculed or reviled (in those articles which define subcultures as social problems). [...] Eventually, the mods, the punks, the glitter rockers can be incorporated, brought back into line, located on the preferred 'map of problematic social reality' (Geertz, 1964) at the point where boys in lipstick are 'just kids dressing up', where girls in rubber dresses are 'daughters just like yours'.

He (1979:94) identifies two characteristic forms of incorporation/recuperation to diffuse the subversive potential of punk: "(1) the conversion of subcultural signs (dress, music, etc.) into mass-produced objects (i.e. the commodity form); (2) the 'labelling' and re-definition of deviant behaviour by dominant groups – the police, the media, the judiciary (i.e. the ideological form)".

I quote Hebdige extensively above in order to show the similarities between what he maps and what I observed during my fieldwork. The initial wave of hysteria; simultaneous celebration and ridicule; and the commodity and ideological forms of recuperation are all seen in the adventure of the *apaçi* style, of course in its own peculiar way in its own cultural and historical context. What makes the above approach useful is that it makes it possible to see the tensions and contradictions that lead to the emergence of spectacular styles when combined with the creative agency of people. If we are to make only one conclusion; the emergence of the *apaçi* style and young people's vehement search for new systems of communication and forms of expression and representation point to their discontent with existing ones, and to their hope of carving out spaces for themselves by subverting the mainstream systems.

In this thesis, I discussed the novel elements of lifestyle and ways of self-expression among urban working-class male youth, or the spectacular youth, in Turkey

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question. Keeping in mind these criticisms and avoiding those identified problems that I find valid; I think that the approach retains its power and pertinence for making sense of the emergence of unconventional styles.

in relation to the history of the discursive exclusion of migrant urbanites and the neoliberal policies of the post-1980 period. This new trend among lower-class youth finds its most notable and spectacular expression in the rise of *apaçi* style. I tried to demonstrate in this thesis that these novel cultural practices emerge as an outcome of the tensions and contradictions inherent in the social texture. It could be argued that the legacy of exclusionary discourses, which were mainly based on the bodies and appearances of the urban poor, manifests itself in the form of an over-interest in physical appearance and an eagerness to make one's presence felt. In other words, this hegemonic discourse that used to be articulated through the epithets like *maganda* and *kıro* has been internalized by lower class youth; and thus through their modifications on their bodies they try to escape from such labels. However, this time the hegemonic discourse updates itself and produces a new derogatory and all-encompassing label.

I see neoliberalism not only as a guiding principle of macro-level political economic policies, but also as a form of governmentality that reshapes subjectivities and interpersonal relations according to a market logic. In a nutshell, neoliberalism is, as David Harvey (2005:2) writes, "in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade". Not only do these macro-level policy changes indirectly influence people's lives, they also actively attempt "to create the conditions within which entrepreneurial and competitive conduct is possible" (Barry et al., 1996:10). Although it manifests itself differently in different contexts, among the interconnected values that the neoliberal market logic aims to impose upon individuals are individuality, self-actualization, self-responsibility, competitive and entrepreneurial spirit, market rationality and the logic of individual choice (cf. Brown 2003, Tuğal 2012, Potuoğlu-Cook 2006, Peters 2001, Collins et al. 2008). In the thesis, I demonstrated that the new patterns gaining popularity among young people cannot be addressed without taking into consideration the above-mentioned operation of neoliberalization in the post-1980 period in Turkey.

Turkey's opening to world markets and integration into the global culture of consumerism enabled individuals to "choose" between globalized images, sounds or commodities and thereby craft their identities. This culture urges people to be aware of their selves and choices. That is, as I observed in my fieldwork, people readily make

identity statements through their choices. Müslüm, for example, was into hip-hop for a while in the past, but he gave it up and turned to dancing, because his body is flexible.[100] Yasin, similarly, has tried singing other music genres but eventually decided to arabesk rap, because his voice is more suitable to rapping.[101] As I have shown, they constantly engage in competition with others in their day-to-day activities. Being different from others and standing out from the crowds are the motives, which guide their choices and which recurred most frequently in the interviews. This shows how the competitive logic reshapes their senses of self and their everyday interactions.

Most of their innovative practices are legitimized by their self-reliance and economic independence from their families. The facts that they spend the money they earn and that they make their own choices and their own ways endow them with a large room for maneuver. As an outcome, they transform the components of proper masculinity, that is, the state of being *delikanlı*. This, I argue, indicates how the post-1980s market logic influences intimate domains (cf. Potuoğlu-Cook, 2006).

Linked to the above tendencies, I also commented on the operation of celebrity culture, an integral component of the neoliberal condition (Hall, 2011), in the everyday lives of my interlocutors. Hedges (2009:16) writes the following regarding the power of celebrity culture:

> We try to see ourselves moving through our life as a camera would see us, mindful of how we hold ourselves, how we dress, what we say. We invent movies that play inside our heads. We imagine ourselves the main characters. We imagine how an audience would react to each event in the movie of our life. [...] Celebrity culture has taught us to generate, almost unconsciously, interior personal screenplays in the mold of Hollywood, television, and even commercials. We have learned ways of speaking and thinking that disfigure the way we relate to the world. [...] Commodities and celebrity culture define what it means to belong, how we recognize our place in society, and how we conduct our lives.

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[100] "Ben bir ara hip hop yapıyordum, bıraktım artık. Dans ediyorum ben, çünkü vücudum esnek."

[101] "Arabesk olsun metal olsun şu olsun bu olsun, bunları da denedim aslında, ama sesim rap'e daha uygun, o yüzden arabesk rap yapıyorum. Gangster da yaptığım da oluyor."

This is further linked to young people's quest for recognition and appreciation by means of visibility. I observed that they insistently search for venues to assert their presence in the cyber and urban spaces. "Cities have become strategically crucial geographical arenas in which a variety of neoliberal initiatives have been articulated (Brenner and Theodore, 2002: 351), and the neoliberal logic operating at the level of Istanbul continuously pushes the urban poor to the desirably-invisible peripheries, continuously reproduces a more spatially and socioeconomically segregated city, and promotes Istanbul as a world-class global city by generating a coherent image and culture of Istanbul. Young people resist this exclusion through their spectacular styles, through their intense mobility, both across the city and on the web, and through their struggle to be included in the image and culture of Istanbul, which is promoted as a competitive and global city.

For these reasons, their efforts at first seem to be desperate or paradoxical. At least, what they aspire to accomplish seems to be extremely challenging. They try to escape from exclusionary labels but what they get in return is just another –updated- derogatory label; they try to craft unique and competitive identities and participate in the game of consumerism and exhibitionism yet they are again excluded from the actual spaces and representations of the city. However, through their creative and insistent interventions, they unsettle the symbolic order of the society by "interrupting the process of normalization" (Hebdige, 1979:18). They "steal" the markers of prestige and status and appropriate them; they force redefinitions of proper masculinity; and they blur the distinctions of modern/traditional and center/periphery. While, through these interventions, they mount their challenges to the existing social and symbolic order, they utilize the instruments provided by the hegemonic system itself (cf. Gledhill, 1994).

These new urban actors challenge their exclusion from the urban space and from the representations of the city; but they lack conventional forms of political language and means of collective organization. They strive to make room for themselves in today's competitive atmosphere as either commodified images or consumers. That is, the case of *apaçi* shows that in today's spectacle society classes interact, if not conflict, through images.

I will finish my discussion by further offering a number of comments/conclusions. First, the *apaçi* style is a unique construct; although it is manifested through consumption and influenced by popular cultural images, the creative agency of the working-class youth and a distinct working-class identity are always embedded in it. Therefore, it serves as a common auditory, visual and symbolic language among lower class youth of Turkey. Second, like what Krista A. Thompson (2011) notes on the influence of hip-hop's visual language on Bahamian youth, the emergence of *the spectacular youth* in Turkey points to a search among these young people for new ways of self-representation "that transcend the prevailing signifiers of the ruling society" (Thompson, 2011:37). In other words, not only do today's Turkish youth want to be seen in places where their presence is undesired; they also want to be seen as they want to be seen. Third, as they constantly follow and borrow from transnational youth groups and styles, they go beyond national boundaries and experience a connection to other marginal groups across the world.

As Soysal (2004: 63) puts it, "like every popular youth culture episode, their [*immigrant rappers in Germany*] times come and go. Today they are hailed as the next 'big' thing, tomorrow they disappear from the stages of cool". This is also valid for the *apaçi* culture; however, it leaves its mark on the cultural history of Turkey, and as a unique ring in the historical chain of class conflict in Turkey over space and discourse, it carries some potential to turn into a stronger mode of self-expression.

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